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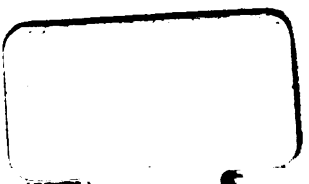

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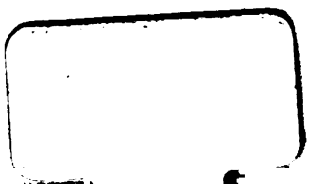

Major Dobbin and the Baby

Kensington Limited Edition

VANITY FAIR

A NOVEL WITHOUT A HERO

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.

LOVEL THE WIDOWER

BY

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON
ESTES & LAURIAT
1891

KF19214

KENSINGTON LIMITED EDITION.

Limited to One Thousand Copies.

No. 295 .....

TYPOGRAPHY, ELECTROTYPING, AND PRINTING BY JOHN WILSON AND SON, UNIVERSITY PRESS, CAMBRIDGE, U.S.A.

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VANITY FAIR.

A NOVEL WITHOUT A HERO.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE SAME SUBJECT IS PURSUED.

Becky did not rally from the state of stupor and confusion in which the events of the previous night had plunged her intrepid spirit, until the bells of the Curzon Street Chapels were ringing for afternoon service, and rising from her bed she began to ply her own bell, in order to summon the French maid who had left her some hours before.

Mrs. Rawdon Crawley rang many times in vain; and though, on the last occasion, she rang with such vehemence as to pull down the bell-rope, Mademoiselle Fifine did not make her appearance, — no, not though her mistress, in a great pet, and with the bell-rope in her hand, came out to the landing-place with her hair over her shoulders, and screamed out repeatedly for her attendant.

The truth is, she had quitted the premises for many hours, and upon that permission which is called French leave among us. After picking up the trinkets in the drawing-room, Mademoiselle had ascended to her own apartments, packed and corded her own boxes there, tripped out and called a cab for herself, brought down her trunks with her own

hand, and without ever so much as asking the aid of any of the other servants, who would probably have refused it, as they hated her cordially, and without wishing any one of them good-by, had made her exit from Curzon Street.

The game, in her opinion, was over in that little domestic establishment. Fifine went off in a cab, as we have known more exalted persons of her nation to do under similar circumstances: but, more provident or lucky than these, she secured not only her own property, but some of her mistress's (if indeed that lady could be said to have any property at all) — and not only carried off the trinkets before alluded to, and some favorite dresses on which she had long kept her eye, but four richly gilt Louis Quatorze candlesticks, six gilt Albums, Keepsakes, and Books of Beauty, a gold enamelled snuff-box which had once belonged to Madame du Barri, and the sweetest little ink-stand and mother-of-pearl blotting-book, which Becky used when she composed her charming little pink notes, had vanished from the premises in Curzon Street together with Mademoiselle Fifine, and all the silver laid on the table for the little *festin* which Rawdon interrupted. The plated ware Mademoiselle left behind her was too cumbrous probably, for which reason, no doubt, she also left the fire irons, the chimney-glasses, and the rosewood cottage piano.

A lady very like her subsequently kept a milliner's shop in the Rue du Helder at Paris, where she lived with great credit and enjoyed the patronage of my Lord Steyne. This person always spoke of England as of the most treacherous country in the world, and stated to her young pupils that she had been *affreusement volé* by natives of that island. It was no doubt compassion for her misfortunes which induced

the Marquis of Steyne to be so very kind to Madame de Saint Amaranthe. May she flourish as she deserves, — she appears no more in our quarter of Vanity Fair.

Hearing a buzz and a stir below, and indignant at the impudence of those servants who would not answer her summons, Mrs. Crawley flung her morning robe round her, and descended majestically to the drawing-room, whence the noise proceeded.

The cook was there with blackened face, seated on the beautiful chintz sofa by the side of Mrs. Raggles, to whom she was administering Maraschino. The page with the sugar-loaf buttons, who carried about Becky's pink notes, and jumped about her little carriage with such alacrity, was now engaged putting his fingers into a cream dish; the footman was talking to Raggles, who had a face full of perplexity and woe — and yet, though the door was open, and Becky had been screaming a half-dozen of times a few feet off, not one of her attendants had obeyed her call. "Have a little drop, do'ee now, Mrs. Raggles," the cook was saying as Becky entered, the white cashmere dressing-gown flouncing around her.

"Simpson! Trotter!" the mistress of the house cried in great wrath. "How dare you stay here when you heard me call? How dare you sit down in my presence? Where's my maid?" The page withdrew his fingers from his mouth with a momentary terror: but the cook took off a glass of Maraschino, of which Mrs. Raggles had had enough, staring at Becky over the little gilt glass as she drained its contents. The liquor appeared to give the odious rebel courage.

"*Your* sofy, indeed!" Mrs. Cook said. "I'm a settin' on Mrs. Raggles's sofy. Don't you stir, Mrs. Raggles, Mum. I'm a settin' on Mr. and Mrs.

Raggles's sofy, which they bought with honest money, and very dear it cost 'em, too. And I'm thinkin' if I set here until I'm paid my wages, I shall set a precious long time, Mrs. Raggles; and set I will, too — ha! ha!" and with this she filled herself another glass of the liquor, and drank it with a more hideously satirical air.

"Trotter! Simpson! turn that drunken wretch out," screamed Mrs. Crawley.

"I shawn't," said Trotter the footman; "turn out yourself. Pay our selleries, and turn me out too. *We'll* go fast enough."

"Are you all here to insult me?" cried Becky in a fury; "when Colonel Crawley comes home I'll —"

At this the servants burst into a horse haw-haw, in which, however, Raggles, who still kept a most melancholy countenance, did not join. "He ain't a coming back," Mr. Trotter resumed. "He sent for his things, and I would n't let 'em go, although Mr. Raggles would: and I don't b'lieve he's no more a Colonel than I am. He's hoff: and I suppose you're a goin' after him. You're no better than swindlers, both on you. Don't be a bullyin' *me*. I won't stand it. Pay us our selleries, I say. Pay us our selleries." It was evident, from Mr. Trotter's flushed countenance and defective intonation, that he, too, had had recourse to vinous stimulus.

"Mr. Raggles," said Becky, in a passion of vexation, "you will not surely let me be insulted by that drunken man?" "Hold your noise, Trotter; do now," said Simpson the page. He was affected by his mistress's deplorable situation, and succeeded in preventing an outrageous denial of the epithet "drunken" on the footman's part.

"O Mam," said Raggles, "I never thought to live to see this year day. I've known the Crawley family

ever since I was born. I lived butler with Miss Crawley for thirty years; and I little thought one of that family was a goin' to ruing me — yes, ruing me" — said the poor fellow with tears in his eyes. "Har you a goin' to pay me? You've lived in this 'ouse four year. You've 'ad my substance: my plate and linning. You ho me a milk and butter bill of two 'undred pound, you must 'ave noo laid heggs for your homlets, and cream for your spanil dog."

"She did n't care what her own flesh and blood had," interposed the cook. "Many's the time, he'd have starved but for me."

"He's a charaty boy now, Cooky," said Mr. Trotter, with a drunken "ha! ha!" — and honest Raggles continued, in a lamentable tone, an enumeration of his griefs. All he said was true. Becky and her husband had ruined him. He had bills coming due next week and no means to meet them. He would be sold up and turned out of his shop and his house, because he had trusted to the Crawley family. His tears and lamentations made Becky more peevish than ever.

"You all seem to be against me," she said, bitterly. "What do you want? I can't pay you on Sunday. Come back to-morrow and I'll pay you everything. I thought Colonel Crawley had settled with you. He will to-morrow. I declare to you upon my honor that he left home this morning with fifteen hundred pounds in his pocket-book. He has left me nothing. Apply to him. Give me a bonnet and shawl and let me go out and find him. There was a difference between us this morning. You all seem to know it. I promise you upon my word that you shall all be paid. He has got a good appointment. Let me go out and find him."

This audacious statement caused Raggles and the other personages present to look at one another with a wild surprise, and with it Rebecca left them. She went up stairs and dressed herself this time without the aid of her French maid. She went into Rawdon's room, and there saw that a trunk and bag were packed ready for removal, with a pencil direction that they should be given when called for; then she went into the Frenchwoman's garret; everything was clean, and all the drawers emptied there. She bethought herself of the trinkets which had been left on the ground, and felt certain that the woman had fled. "Good Heavens! was ever such ill luck as mine?" she said; "to be so near, and to lose all. Is it all too late? No; there was one chance more."

She dressed herself, and went away unmolested this time, but alone. It was four o'clock. She went swiftly down the streets (she had no money to pay for a carriage), and never stopped until she came to Sir Pitt Crawley's door, in Great Gaunt Street. Where was Lady Jane Crawley? She was at church. Becky was not sorry. Sir Pitt was in his study, and had given orders not to be disturbed — she must see him — she slipped by the sentinel in livery at once, and was in Sir Pitt's room before the astonished Baronet had even laid down the paper.

He turned red and started back from her with a look of great alarm and horror.

"Do not look so," she said. "I am not guilty, Pitt, dear Pitt; you were my friend once. Before God, I am not guilty. I seem so. Everything is against me. And oh, at such a moment! just when all my hopes were about to be realized: just when happiness was in store for us."

"Is this true, what I see in the paper then?" Sir Pitt said — a paragraph in which had greatly surprised him.

"It is true. Lord Steyne told me on Friday night, the night of that fatal ball. He has been promised an appointment any time these six months. Mr. Martyr, the Colonial Secretary, told him yesterday that it was made out. That unlucky arrest ensued; that horrible meeting. I was only guilty of too much devotedness to Rawdon's service. I have received Lord Steyne alone a hundred times before. I confess I had money of which Rawdon knew nothing. Don't you know how careless he is of it, and could I dare to confide it to him?" And so she went on with a perfectly connected story, which she poured into the ears of her perplexed kinsman.

It was to the following effect. Becky owned, and with perfect frankness, but deep contrition, that having remarked Lord Steyne's partiality for her (at the mention of which Pitt blushed), and being secure of her own virtue, she had determined to turn the great peer's attachment to the advantage of herself and her family. "I looked for a peerage for you, Pitt," she said (the brother-in-law again turned red). "We have talked about it. Your genius and Lord Steyne's interest made it more than probable, had not this dreadful calamity come to put an end to all our hopes. But, first, I own that it was my object to rescue my dear husband, — him whom I love in spite of all his ill usage and suspicions of me, — to remove him from the poverty and ruin which was impending over us. I saw Lord Steyne's partiality for me," she said, casting down her eyes. "I own that I did everything in my power to make myself pleasing to him, and as far as an honest woman may, to secure his — his esteem.

It was only on Friday morning that the news arrived of the death of the Governor of Coventry Island, and my lord instantly secured the appointment for my dear husband. It was intended as a surprise for him, — he was to see it in the papers to-day. Even after that horrid arrest took place (the expenses of which Lord Steyne generously said he would settle, so that I was in a manner prevented from coming to my husband's assistance), my lord was laughing with me, and saying that my dearest Rawdon would be consoled when he read of his appointment in the paper, in that shocking spun — bailiff's house. And then — then he came home. His suspicions were excited — the dreadful scene took place between my lord and my cruel, cruel Rawdon — and, O my God, what will happen next? Pitt, dear Pitt! pity me, and reconcile us!" And as she spoke she flung herself down on her knees, and bursting into tears, seized hold of Pitt's hand, which she kissed passionately.

It was in this very attitude that Lady Jane, who, returning from church, ran to her husband's room directly she heard Mrs. Rawdon Crawley was closeted there, found the Baronet and his sister-in-law.

"I am surprised that woman has the audacity to enter this house," Lady Jane said, trembling in every limb, and turning quite pale. (Her ladyship had sent out her maid directly after breakfast, who had communicated with Raggles and Rawdon Crawley's household, who had told her all, and a great deal more than they knew, of that story, and many others besides.) "How dare Mrs. Crawley to enter the house of — of an honest family?"

Sir Pitt started back, amazed at his wife's display of vigor. Becky still kept her kneeling posture, and clung to Sir Pitt's hand.

"Tell her that she does not know all. Tell her that I am innocent, dear Pitt," she whimpered out.

"Upon my word, my love, I think you do Mrs. Crawley injustice," Sir Pitt said; at which speech Rebecca was vastly relieved. "Indeed I believe her to be —"

"To be what?" cried out Lady Jane, her clear voice thrilling, and her heart beating violently as she spoke. "To be a wicked woman — a heartless mother, a false wife? She never loved her dear little boy, who used to fly here and tell me of her cruelty to him. She never came into a family but she strove to bring misery with her, and to weaken the most sacred affections with her wicked flattery and falsehoods. She has deceived her husband, as she has deceived everybody; her soul is black with vanity, worldliness, and all sorts of crime. I tremble when I touch her. I keep my children out of her sight. I —"

"Lady Jane!" cried Sir Pitt, starting up, "this is really language —"

"I have been a true and faithful wife to you, Sir Pitt," Lady Jane continued, intrepidly; "I have kept my marriage vow as I made it to God, and have been obedient and gentle as a wife should. But righteous obedience has its limits, and I declare that I will not bear that — that woman again under my roof: if she enters it, I and my children will leave it. She is not worthy to sit down with Christian people. You — you must choose, sir, between her and me;" and with this my lady swept out of the room, fluttering with her own audacity, and leaving Rebecca and Sir Pitt not a little astonished at it.

As for Becky, she was not hurt; nay, she was pleased. "It was the diamond-clasp you gave me," she said to Sir Pitt, reaching him out her hand; and

before she left him (for which event you may be sure my Lady Jane was looking out from her dressing-room window in the upper story) the Baronet had promised to go and seek out his brother, and endeavor to bring about a reconciliation.

Rawdon found some of the young fellows of the regiment seated in the mess-room at breakfast, and was induced without much difficulty to partake of that meal, and of the devilled legs of fowls and soda-water with which these young gentlemen fortified themselves. Then they had a conversation befitting the day and their time of life: about the next pigeon-match at Battersea, with relative bets upon Ross and Osbaldiston: about Mademoiselle Ariane of the French Opera, and who had left her, and how she was consoled by Panther Carr; and about the fight between the Butcher and the Pet, and the probabilities that it was a cross. Young Tandyman, a hero of seventeen, laboriously endeavoring to get up a pair of mustachios, had seen the fight, and spoke in the most scientific manner about the battle, and the condition of the men. It was he who had driven the Butcher on to the ground in his drag, and passed the whole of the previous night with him. Had there not been foul play he must have won it. All the old files of the Ring were in it: and Tandyman would n't pay; no, dammy, he would n't pay. — It was but a year since the young Cornet, now so knowing a hand in Cribb's parlor, had a still lingering liking for toffy, and used to be birched at Eton.

So they went on talking about dancers, fights, drinking, demireps, until Macmurdo came down and joined the boys and the conversation. He did not appear to think that any especial reverence was due to their

boyhood; the old fellow cut in with stories, to the full as choice as any the youngest rake present had to tell; — nor did his own gray hairs, nor their smooth faces detain him. Old Mac was famous for his good stories. He was not exactly a lady's man; that is, men asked him to dine rather at the houses of their mistresses than of their mothers. There can scarcely be a life lower, perhaps, than his; but he was quite contented with it, such as it was, and led it in perfect good-nature, simplicity, and modesty of demeanor.

By the time Mac had finished a copious breakfast, most of the others had concluded their meal. Young Lord Varinas was smoking an immense Meerschaum pipe, while Captain Hugues was employed with a cigar: that violent little devil Tandyman, with his little bull-terrier between his legs, was tossing for shillings with all his might (that fellow was always at some game or other) against Captain Deuceace; and Mac and Rawdon walked off to the Club, neither, of course, having given any hint of the business which was occupying their minds.

Both, on the other hand, had joined pretty gayly in the conversation; for why should they interrupt it? Feasting, drinking, ribaldry, laughter, go on alongside of all sorts of other occupations in Vanity Fair, — the crowds were pouring out of church as Rawdon and his friend passed down St. James's Street and entered into their Club.

The old bucks and *habitués*, who ordinarily stand gaping and grinning out of the great front window of the Club, had not arrived at their posts as yet, — the newspaper-room was almost empty. One man was present whom Rawdon did not know; another to whom he owed a little score for whist, and whom, in consequence, he did not care to meet; a third was

reading the "Royalist" (a periodical famous for its scandal and its attachment to Church and King) Sunday paper at the table, and, looking up at Crawley with some interest, said, "Crawley, I congratulate you."

"What do you mean?" said the Colonel.

"It's in the 'Observer' and the 'Royalist' too," said Mr. Smith.

"What?" Rawdon cried, turning very red. He thought that the affair with Lord Steyne was already in the public prints. Smith looked up wondering and smiling at the agitation which the Colonel exhibited as he took up the paper, and trembling, began to read.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown (the gentleman with whom Rawdon had the outstanding whist account) had been talking about the Colonel just before he came in.

"It is come just in the nick of time," said Smith. "I suppose Crawley had not a shilling in the world."

"It's a wind that blows everybody good," Mr. Brown said. "He can't go away without paying me a pony he owes me."

"What's the salary?" asked Smith.

"Two or three thousand," answered the other. "But the climate's so infernal, they don't enjoy it long. Liverseege died after eighteen months of it: and the man before went off in six weeks, I hear."

"Some people say his brother is a very clever man. I always found him a d—— bore," Smith ejaculated. "He must have good interest, though. He must have got the Colonel the place."

"*He!*" said Brown, with a sneer — "Pooh. — It was Lord Steyne got it."

"How do you mean?"

"A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband," answered the other, enigmatically, and went to read his papers.

Rawdon, for his part, read in the "Royalist" the following astonishing paragraph: —

"GOVERNORSHIP OF COVENTRY ISLAND. — H.M.S. Yellowjack, Commander Jaunders, has brought letters and papers from Coventry Island. H. E. Sir Thomas Liverseege had fallen a victim to the prevailing fever at Swamp Town. His loss is deeply felt in the flourishing colony. We hear that the Governorship has been offered to Colonel Rawdon Crawley, C.B., a distinguished Waterloo officer. We need not only men of acknowledged bravery, but men of administrative talents to superintend the affairs of our colonies; and we have no doubt that the gentleman selected by the Colonial Office to fill the lamented vacancy which has occurred at Coventry Island is admirably calculated for the post which he is about to occupy."

"Coventry Island! where was it? who had appointed him to the government? You must take me out as your secretary, old boy," Captain Macmurdo said laughing; and as Crawley and his friend sat wondering and perplexed over the announcement, the Club waiter brought in to the Colonel a card, on which the name of Mr. Wenham was engraved, who begged to see Colonel Crawley.

The Colonel and his *aide-de-camp* went out to meet the gentleman, rightly conjecturing that he was an emissary of Lord Steyne. "How d' ye do, Crawley? I am glad to see you," said Mr. Wenham, with a bland smile, and grasping Crawley's hand with great cordiality.

"You come, I suppose, from — "

"Exactly," said Mr. Wenham.

"Then this is my friend Captain Macmurdo, of the Life Guards Green."

"Delighted to know Captain Macmurdo, I 'm sure," Mr. Wenham said, and tendered another smile and shake of the hand to the second, as he had done to the principal. Mac put out one finger, armed with a buckskin glove, and made a very frigid bow to Mr. Wenham over his tight cravat. He was, perhaps, discontented at being put in communication with a *pékin*, and thought that Lord Steyne should have sent him a Colonel at the very least.

"As Macmurdo acts for me, and knows what I mean," Crawley said, "I had better retire and leave you together."

"Of course," said Macmurdo.

"By no means, my dear Colonel," Mr. Wenham said; "the interview which I had the honor of requesting was with you personally, though the company of Captain Macmurdo cannot fail to be also most pleasing. In fact, Captain, I hope that our conversation will lead to none but the most agreeable results, very different from those which my friend Colonel Crawley appears to anticipate."

"Humph!" said Captain Macmurdo. — Be hanged to these civilians, he thought to himself, they are always for arranging and speechifying. Mr. Wenham took a chair which was not offered to him — took a paper from his pocket, and resumed —

"You have seen this gratifying announcement in the papers this morning, Colonel? Government has secured a most valuable servant, and you, if you accept office, as I presume you will, an excellent appointment. Three thousand a year, delightful climate, excellent government-house, all your own way in the Colony, and a certain promotion. I congratulate you with all my heart. I presume you know, gentlemen, to whom my friend is indebted for this piece of patronage?"

"Hanged if I know," the Captain said: his principal turned very red.

"To one of the most generous and kindest men in the world, as he is one of the greatest — to my excellent friend, the Marquis of Steyne."

"I'll see him d—— before I take his place," growled out Rawdon.

"You are irritated against my noble friend," Mr. Wenham calmly resumed: "and now, in the name of common sense and justice, tell me why?"

"*Why?*" cried Rawdon in surprise.

"Why? Dammy!" said the Captain, ringing his stick on the ground.

"Dammy, indeed," said Mr. Wenham, with the most agreeable smile; "still, look at the matter as a man of the world — as an honest man, and see if you have not been in the wrong. You come home from a journey, and find — what? — my Lord Steyne supping at your house in Curzon Street with Mrs. Crawley. Is the circumstance strange or novel? Has he not been a hundred times before in the same position? Upon my honor and word as a gentleman," (Mr. Wenham here put his hand on his waistcoat with a parliamentary air,) "I declare I think that your suspicions are monstrous and utterly unfounded, and that they injure an honorable gentleman who has proved his good will towards you by a thousand benefactions — and a most spotless and innocent lady."

"You don't mean to say that — that Crawley's mistaken?" said Mr. Macmurdo.

"I believe that Mrs. Crawley is as innocent as my wife, Mrs. Wenham," Mr. Wenham said, with great energy. "I believe that, misled by an infernal jealousy, my friend here strikes a blow against not only

an infirm and old man of high station, his constant friend and benefactor, but against his wife, his own dearest honor, his son's future reputation, and his own prospects in life.

"I will tell you what happened," Mr. Wenham continued with great solemnity; "I was sent for this morning by my Lord Steyne, and found him in a pitiable state, as, I need hardly inform Colonel Crawley, any man of age and infirmity would be after a personal conflict with a man of your strength. I say to your face; it was a cruel advantage you took of that strength, Colonel Crawley. It was not only the body of my noble and excellent friend which was wounded — his heart, sir, was bleeding. A man whom he had loaded with benefits and regarded with affection, had subjected him to the foulest indignity. What was this very appointment, which appears in the journals of to-day, but a proof of his kindness to you? When I saw his lordship this morning I found him in a state pitiable indeed to see: and as anxious as you are to revenge the outrage committed upon him, by blood. You know he has given his proofs, I presume, Colonel Crawley?"

"He has plenty of pluck," said the Colonel. "Nobody ever said he had n't."

"His first order to me was to write a letter of challenge, and to carry it to Colonel Crawley. One or other of us," he said, "must not survive the outrage of last night."

Crawley nodded. "You 're coming to the point, Wenham," he said.

"I tried my utmost to calm Lord Steyne. Good God! sir," I said, "how I regret that Mrs. Wenham and myself had not accepted Mrs. Crawley's invitation to sup with her!"

"She asked you to sup with her?" Captain Macmurdo said.

"After the Opera. Here's the note of invitation — stop — no, this is another paper — I thought I had it, but it's of no consequence, and I pledge you my word to the fact. If we had come — and it was only one of Mrs. Wenham's headaches which prevented us — she suffers under them a good deal, especially in the spring — if we had come, and you had returned home, there would have been no quarrel, no insult, no suspicion — and so it is positively because my poor wife has a headache that you are to bring death down upon two men of honor, and plunge two of the most excellent and ancient families in the kingdom into disgrace and sorrow."

Mr. Macmurdo looked at his principal with the air of a man profoundly puzzled: and Rawdon felt with a kind of rage that his prey was escaping him. He did not believe a word of the story, and yet, how discredit or disprove it?

Mr. Wenham continued with the same fluent oratory, which in his place in parliament he had so often practised — "I sat for an hour or more by Lord Steyne's bedside, beseeching, imploring Lord Steyne to forego his intention of demanding a meeting. I pointed out to him that the circumstances were after all suspicious — they were suspicious. I acknowledge it, — any man in your position might have been taken in — I said that a man furious with jealousy is to all intents and purposes a madman, and should be as such regarded — that a duel between you must lead to the disgrace of all parties concerned — that a man of his lordship's exalted station had no right in these days, when the most atrocious revolutionary principles, and the most dangerous levelling doctrines are preached

among the vulgar, to create a public scandal; and that, however innocent, the common people would insist that he was guilty. In fine, I implored him not to send the challenge."

"I don't believe one word of the whole story," said Rawdon, grinding his teeth. "I believe it a d—— lie, and that you're in it, Mr. Wenham. If the challenge don't come from him, by Jove it shall come from me."

Mr. Wenham turned deadly pale at this savage interruption of the Colonel, and looked towards the door.

But he found a champion in Captain Macmurdo. That gentleman rose up with an oath, and rebuked Rawdon for his language. "You put the affair into my hands, and you shall act as I think fit, by Jove, and not as you do. You have no right to insult Mr. Wenham with this sort of language; and dammy, Mr. Wenham, you deserve an apology. And as for a challenge to Lord Steyne, you may get somebody else to carry it, I won't. If my lord, after being thrashed, chooses to sit still, dammy let him. And as for the affair with — with Mrs. Crawley, my belief is, there's nothing proved at all: that your wife's innocent, as innocent as Mr. Wenham says she is: and at any rate, that you would be a d—— fool not to take the place and hold your tongue."

"Captain Macmurdo, you speak like a man of sense," Mr. Wenham cried out, immensely relieved — "I forget any words that Colonel Crawley has used in the irritation of the moment."

"I thought you would," Rawdon said, with a sneer.

"Shut your mouth, you old stoopid," the Captain said, good-naturedly. "Mr. Wenham ain't a fighting man; and quite right, too."

"This matter, in my belief," the Steyne emissary cried, "ought to be buried in the most profound oblivion. A word concerning it should never pass these doors. I speak in the interest of my friend, as well as of Colonel Crawley, who persists in considering me his enemy."

"I suppose Lord Steyne won't talk about it very much," said Captain Macmurdo; "and I don't see why our side should. The affair ain't a very pretty one, any way you take it; and the less said about it the better. It 's you are thrashed, and not us; and if you are satisfied, why, I think, we should be."

Mr. Wenham took his hat, upon this, and Captain Macmurdo following him to the door, shut it upon himself and Lord Steyne's agent, leaving Rawdon chafing within. When the two were on the other side, Macmurdo looked hard at the other ambassador, and with an expression of anything but respect on his round jolly face.

"You don't stick at a trifle, Mr. Wenham," he said.

"You flatter me, Captain Macmurdo," answered the other, with a smile. "Upon my honor and conscience now, Mrs. Crawley did ask us to sup after the Opera."

"Of course; and Mrs. Wenham had one of her headaches. I say, I 've got a thousand-pound note here, which I will give you if you will give me a receipt, please; and I will put the note up in an envelope for Lord Steyne. My man sha'n't fight him. But we had rather not take his money."

"It was all a mistake, — all a mistake, my dear sir," the other said, with the utmost innocence of manner; and was bowed down the Club steps by Captain Macmurdo, just as Sir Pitt Crawley ascended them. There was a slight acquaintance between these two gentle-

men; and the Captain, going back with the Baronet to the room where the latter's brother was, told Sir Pitt, in confidence, that he had made the affair all right between Lord Steyne and the Colonel.

Sir Pitt was well pleased, of course, at this intelligence; and congratulated his brother warmly upon the peaceful issue of the affair, making appropriate moral remarks upon the evils of duelling, and the unsatisfactory nature of that sort of settlement of disputes.

And after this preface, he tried with all his eloquence to effect a reconciliation between Rawdon and his wife. He recapitulated the statements which Becky had made, pointed out the probabilities of their truth, and asserted his own firm belief in her innocence.

But Rawdon would not hear of it. "She has kept money concealed from me these ten years," he said. "She swore, last night only, she had none from Steyne. She knew it was all up, directly I found it. If she's not guilty, Pitt, she's as bad as guilty; and I'll never see her again, — never." His head sank down on his chest as he spoke the words; and he looked quite broken and sad.

"Poor old boy," Macmurdo said, shaking his head.

Rawdon Crawley resisted for some time the idea of taking the place which had been procured for him by so odious a patron: and was also for removing the boy from the school where Lord Steyne's interest had placed him. He was induced, however, to acquiesce in these benefits by the entreaties of his brother and Macmurdo: but mainly by the latter pointing out to him what a fury Steyne would be in, to think that his enemy's fortune was made through his means.

When the Marquis of Steyne came abroad after his accident, the Colonial Secretary bowed up to him and congratulated himself and the Service upon having made so excellent an appointment. These congratulations were received with a degree of gratitude which may be imagined on the part of Lord Steyne.

The secret of the *rencontre* between him and Colonel Crawley was buried in the profoundest oblivion, as Wenham said; that is by the seconds and the principals. But before that evening was over it was talked of at fifty dinner-tables in Vanity Fair. Little Cackleby himself went to seven evening parties, and told the story with comments and emendations at each place. How Mrs. Washington White revelled in it! The Bishopess of Ealing was shocked beyond expression: the Bishop went and wrote his name down in the visiting-book at Gaunt House that very day. Little Southdown was sorry: so you may be sure was his sister Lady Jane, very sorry. Lady Southdown wrote it off to her other daughter at the Cape of Good Hope. It was town-talk for at least three days, and was only kept out of the newspapers by the exertions of Mr. Wagg, acting upon a hint from Mr. Wenham.

The bailiffs and brokers seized upon poor Raggles in Curzon Street, and the late fair tenant of that poor little mansion was in the meanwhile — where? Who cared? Who asked after a day or two? Was she guilty or not? We all know how charitable the world is, and how the verdict of Vanity Fair goes when there is a doubt. Some people said she had gone to Naples in pursuit of Lord Steyne; whilst others averred that his lordship quitted that city, and fled to Palermo on hearing of Becky's arrival; some said she was living in Bierstadt, and had become a *dame d' honneur* to the Queen of Bulgaria; some that

she was at Boulogne; and others, at a boarding-house at Cheltenham.

Rawdon made her a tolerable annuity; and we may be sure that she was a woman who could make a little money go a great way, as the saying is. He would have paid his debts on leaving England, could he have got any Insurance Office to take his life; but the climate of Coventry Island was so bad that he could borrow no money on the strength of his salary. He remitted, however, to his brother punctually, and wrote to his little boy regularly every mail. He kept Macmurdo in cigars; and sent over quantities of shells, cayenne pepper, hot pickles, guava jelly, and colonial produce to Lady Jane. He sent his brother home the "Swamp Town Gazette," in which the new Governor was praised with immense enthusiasm; whereas the "Swamp Town Sentinel," whose wife was not asked to Government House, declared that his Excellency was a tyrant, compared to whom Nero was an enlightened philanthropist. Little Rawdon used to like to get the papers and read about his Excellency.

His mother never made any movement to see the child. He went home to his aunt for Sundays and holidays; he soon knew every bird's nest about Queen's Crawley, and rode out with Sir Huddlestone's hounds, which he admired so on his first well-remembered visit to Hampshire.

CHAPTER II.

GEORGY IS MADE A GENTLEMAN.

GEORGY OSBORNE was now fairly established in his grandfather's mansion in Russell Square: occupant of his father's room in the house, and heir-apparent of all the splendors there. The good looks, gallant bearing, and gentlemanlike appearance of the boy won the grandsire's heart for him. Mr. Osborne was as proud of him as ever he had been of the elder George.

The child had many more luxuries and indulgences than had been awarded to his father. Osborne's commerce had prospered greatly of late years. His wealth and importance in the City had very much increased. He had been glad enough in former days to put the elder George to a good private school; and a commission in the army for his son had been a source of no small pride to him: for little George and his future prospects the old man looked much higher. He would make a gentleman of the little chap, was Mr. Osborne's constant saying regarding little Georgy. He saw him in his mind's eye, a collegian, a parliament-man, — a Baronet, perhaps. The old man thought he would die contented if he could see his grandson in a fair way to such honors. He would have none but a tip-top college man to educate him, — none of your quacks and pretenders, — no, no. A few years before, he used to be savage, and inveigh against all parsons, scholars, and the like, — declaring that they

were a pack of humbugs, and quacks, that were n't fit to get their living but by grinding Latin and Greek, and a set of supercilious dogs, that pretended to look down upon British merchants and gentlemen, who could buy up half a hundred of 'em. He would mourn now, in a very solemn manner, that his own education had been neglected, and repeatedly point out, in pompous orations to Georgy, the necessity and excellence of classical acquirements.

When they met at dinner the grandsire used to ask the lad what he had been reading during the day, and was greatly interested at the report the boy gave of his own studies; pretending to understand little George when he spoke regarding them. He made a hundred blunders, and showed his ignorance many a time. It did not increase the respect which the child had for his senior. A quick brain and a better education elsewhere showed the boy very soon that his grandsire was a dullard; and he began accordingly to command him and to look down upon him; for his previous education, humble and contracted as it had been, had made a much better gentleman of Georgy than any plans of his grandfather could make him. He had been brought up by a kind, weak, and tender woman, who had no pride about anything, but about him, and whose heart was so pure and whose bearing was so meek and humble, that she could not but needs be a true lady. She busied herself in gentle offices and quiet duties; if she never said brilliant things, she never spoke or thought unkind ones: guileless and artless, loving and pure, indeed how could our poor little Amelia be other than a real gentlewoman.

Young Georgy lorded over this soft and yielding nature: and the contrast of its simplicity and delicacy with the coarse pomposity of the dull old man with

whom he next came in contact, made him lord over the latter too. If he had been a Prince Royal he could not have been better brought up to think well of himself.

Whilst his mother was yearning after him at home, and I do believe every hour of the day, and during most hours of the sad lonely nights, thinking of him, this young gentleman had a number of pleasures and consolations administered to him, which made him for his part bear the separation from Amelia very easily. Little boys who cry when they are going to school — cry because they are going to a very uncomfortable place. It is only a very few who weep from sheer affection. When you think that the eyes of your childhood dried at the sight of a piece of gingerbread, and that a plum-cake was a compensation for the agony of parting with your mamma and sisters; O my friend and brother, you need not be too confident of your own fine feelings.

Well, then, Master George Osborne had every comfort and luxury that a wealthy and lavish old grandfather thought fit to provide. The coachman was instructed to purchase for him the handsomest pony which could be bought for money; and on this George was taught to ride, first at a riding-school, whence, after having performed satisfactorily without stirrups, and over the leaping-bar, he was conducted through the New Road to Regent's Park, and then to Hyde Park, where he rode in state with Martin the coachman behind him. Old Osborne, who took matters more easily in the City now, where he left his affairs to his junior partners, would often ride out with Miss O. in the same fashionable direction. As little Georgy came cantering up with his dandified air, and his heels down, his grandfather would nudge the lad's aunt, and

say, "Look, Miss O." And he would laugh, and his face would grow red with pleasure, as he nodded out of the window to the boy, as the groom saluted the carriage, and the footman saluted Master George. Here too his aunt, Mrs. Frederick Bullock, (whose chariot might daily be seen in the Ring, with bullocks *or* emblazoned on the panels and harness, and three pasty-faced little Bullocks, covered with cockades and feathers, staring from the windows,) — Mrs. Frederick Bullock, I say, flung glances of the bitterest hatred at the little upstart as he rode by with his hand on his side and his hat on one ear, as proud as a lord.

Though he was scarcely eleven years of age, Master George wore straps and the most beautiful little boots like a man. He had gilt spurs, and a gold-headed whip, and a fine pin in his handkerchief; and the neatest little kid gloves which Lamb's Conduit Street could furnish. His mother had given him a couple of neck-cloths, and carefully hemmed and made some little shirts for him; but when her Samuel came to see the widow, they were replaced by much finer linen. He had little jewelled buttons in the lawn shirt-fronts. Her humble presents had been put aside — I believe Miss Osborne had given them to the coachman's boy. Amelia tried to think she was pleased at the change. Indeed, she was happy and charmed to see the boy looking so beautiful.

She had had a little black profile of him done for a shilling; and this was hung up by the side of another portrait over her bed. One day the boy came on his accustomed visit, galloping down the little street at Brompton, and bringing, as usual, all the inhabitants to the windows to admire his splendor, and with great eagerness, and a look of triumph in his face, he pulled a case out of his great-coat — (it was a natty white

great-coat, with a cape and a velvet collar) — pulled out a red morocco case, which he gave her.

"I bought it with my own money, Mamma," he said. "I thought you'd like it."

Amelia opened the case, and giving a little cry of delighted affection, seized the boy and embraced him a hundred times. It was a miniature of himself, very prettily done (though not half handsome enough, we may be sure, the widow thought).

His grandfather had wished to have a picture of him by an artist whose works, exhibited in a shop-window, in Southampton Row, had caught the old gentleman's eyes; and George, who had plenty of money, bethought him of asking the painter how much a copy of the little portrait would cost, saying that he would pay for it out of his own money, and that he wanted to give it to his mother. The pleased painter executed it for a small price; and old Osborne himself, when he heard of the incident, growled out his satisfaction, and gave the boy twice as many sovereigns as he paid for the miniature.

But what was the grandfather's pleasure compared to Amelia's ecstasy? That proof of the boy's affection charmed her so, that she thought no child in the world was like hers for goodness. For long weeks after, the thought of his love made her happy. She slept better with the picture under her pillow; and how many many times did she kiss it, and weep and pray over it! A small kindness from those she loved made that timid heart grateful. Since her parting with George she had had no such joy and consolation.

At his new home Master George ruled like a lord; at dinner he invited the ladies to drink wine with the utmost coolness, and took off his champagne in a way which charmed his old grandfather. "Look at him,"

the old man would say, nudging his neighbor with a delighted purple face, "did you ever see such a chap? Lord, Lord! he'll be ordering a dressing-case next, and razors to shave with; I'm blessed if he won't."

The antics of the lad did not, however, delight Mr. Osborne's friends so much as they pleased the old gentleman. It gave Mr. Justice Coffin no pleasure to hear Georgy cut into the conversation and spoil his stories. Colonel Fogey was not interested in seeing the little boy half tipsy. Mr. Sergeant Toffy's lady felt no particular gratitude when, with a twist of his elbow, he tilted a glass of port-wine over her yellow satin, and laughed at the disaster; nor was she better pleased, although old Osborne was highly delighted, when Georgy "whopped" her third boy (a young gentleman a year older than Georgy, and by chance home for the holidays from Dr. Tickleus's at Ealing School) in Russell Square. George's grandfather gave the boy a couple of sovereigns for that feat, and promised to reward him further for every boy above his own size and age whom he whopped in a similar manner. It is difficult to say what good the old man saw in these combats; he had a vague notion that quarrelling made boys hardy, and that tyranny was a useful accomplishment for them to learn. English youth have been so educated time out of mind, and we have hundreds of thousands of apologists and admirers of injustice, misery, and brutality, as perpetrated among children. Flushed with praise and victory over Master Toffy, George wished naturally to pursue his conquests further, and one day as he was strutting about in prodigiously dandified new clothes, near St. Pancras, and a young baker's boy made sarcastic comments upon his appearance, the youthful patrician pulled off his dandy jacket with

great spirit, and giving it in charge to the friend who accompanied him (Master Todd, of Great Coram Street, Russell Square, son of the junior partner of the house of Osborne and Co.) — George tried to whop the little baker. But the chances of war were unfavorable this time, and the little baker whopped Georgy: who came home with a rueful black eye and all his fine shirt frill dabbled with the claret drawn from his own little nose. He told his grandfather that he had been in combat with a giant; and frightened his poor mother at Brompton with long, and by no means authentic, accounts of the battle.

This young Todd, of Coram Street, Russell Square, was Master George's great friend and admirer. They both had a taste for painting theatrical characters; for hard-bake and raspberry tarts; for sliding and skating in the Regent's Park and the Serpentine, when the weather permitted; for going to the play, whither they were often conducted, by Mr. Osborne's orders, by Rowson, Master George's appointed body-servant, with whom they sat in great comfort in the pit.

In the company of this gentleman they visited all the principal theatres of the metropolis — knew the names of all the actors from Drury Lane to Sadler's Wells; and performed, indeed, many of the plays to the Todd family and their youthful friends, with West's famous characters, on their pasteboard theatre. Rowson, the footman, who was of a generous disposition, would not unfrequently, when in cash, treat his young master to oysters after the play, and to a glass of rum-shrub for a night-cap. We may be pretty certain that Mr. Rowson profited in his turn, by his young master's liberality and gratitude for the pleasures to which the footman inducted him.

A famous tailor from the West End of the town, — Mr. Osborne would have none of your City or Holborn bunglers, he said, for the boy (though a City tailor was good enough for *him*), — was summoned to ornament little George's person, and was told to spare no expense in so doing. So, Mr. Woolsey, of Conduit Street, gave a loose to his imagination, and sent the child home fancy trowsers, fancy waistcoats, and fancy jackets enough to furnish a school of little dandies. Georgy had little white waistcoats for evening parties and little cut velvet waistcoats for dinners, and a dear little darling shawl dressing-gown, for all the world like a little man. He dressed for dinner every day, "like a regular West End Swell," as his grandfather remarked; one of the domestics was affected to his special service, attended him at his toilette, answered his bell, and brought him his letters always on a silver tray.

Georgy, after breakfast, would sit in the arm-chair in the dining-room, and read the "Morning Post," just like a grown-up man. "How he *du* damn and swear," the servants would cry, delighted at his precocity. Those who remembered the Captain his father, declared Master George was his Pa every inch of him. He made the house lively by his activity, his imperiousness, his scolding, and his good nature.

George's education was confided to a neighboring scholar and private pedagogue who "prepared young noblemen and gentlemen for the Universities, the senate, and the learned professions: whose system did not embrace the degrading corporal severities still practised at the ancient places of education, and in whose family the pupils would find the elegances of refined society and the confidence and affection of a

home." It was in this way that the Rev. Lawrence Veal of Hart Street, Bloomsbury, and domestic Chaplain to the Earl of Bareacres, strove with Mrs. Veal his wife to entice pupils.

By thus advertising and pushing sedulously, the domestic Chaplain and his lady generally succeeded in having one or two scholars by them: who paid a high figure: and were thought to be in uncommonly comfortable quarters. There was a large West Indian, whom nobody came to see, with a mahogany complexion, a woolly head, and an exceedingly dandified appearance; there was another hulking boy of three-and-twenty whose education had been neglected, and whom Mr. and Mrs. Veal were to introduce into the polite world: there were two sons of Colonel Bangles of the East India Company's Service: these four sat down to dinner at Mrs. Veal's genteel board, when Georgy was introduced to her establishment.

Georgy was, like some dozen other pupils, only a day boy; he arrived in the morning under the guardianship of his friend Mr. Rowson, and if it was fine, would ride away in the afternoon on his pony, followed by the groom. The wealth of his grandfather was reported in the school to be prodigious. The Rev. Mr. Veal used to compliment Georgy upon it personally, warning him that he was destined for a high station; that it became him to prepare, by sedulity and docility in youth, for the lofty duties to which he would be called in mature age; that obedience in the child was the best preparation for command in the man; and that he therefore begged George would not bring toffy into the school, and ruin the health of the Masters Bangles, who had everything they wanted at the elegant and abundant table of Mrs. Veal.

With respect to learning, "the Curriculum," as Mr.

Veal loved to call it, was of prodigious extent: and the young gentlemen in Hart Street might learn a something of every known science. The Rev. Mr. Veal had an orrery, an electrifying machine, a turning lathe, a theatre (in the wash-house), a chemical apparatus, and what he called a select library of all the works of the best authors of ancient and modern times and languages. He took the boys to the British Museum, and descanted upon the antiquities and the specimens of natural history there, so that audiences would gather round him as he spoke, and all Bloomsbury highly admired him as a prodigiously well-informed man. And whenever he spoke (which he did almost always), he took care to produce the very finest and longest words of which the vocabulary gave him the use; rightly judging, that it was as cheap to employ a handsome, large, and sonorous epithet, as to use a little stingy one.

Thus he would say to George in school, "I observed on my return home from taking the indulgence of an evening's scientific conversation with my excellent friend Doctor Bulders — a true archæologian, gentlemen, a true archæologian — that the windows of your venerated grandfather's almost princely mansion in Russell Square were illuminated as if for the purposes of festivity. Am I right in my conjecture, that Mr. Osborne entertained a society of chosen spirits round his sumptuous board last night?"

Little Georgy, who had considerable humor, and used to mimic Mr. Veal to his face with great spirit and dexterity, would reply, that Mr. V. was quite correct in his surmise.

"Then those friends who had the honor of partaking of Mr. Osborne's hospitality, gentlemen, had no reason, I will lay any wager, to complain of their re-

past. I myself have been more than once so favored. (By the way, Master Osborne, you came a little late this morning, and have been a defaulter in this respect more than once.) I myself, I say, gentlemen, humble as I am, have been found not unworthy to share Mr. Osborne's elegant hospitality. And though I have feasted with the great and noble of the world — for I presume that I may call my excellent friend and patron, the Right Honorable George Earl of Bareacres, one of the number — yet I assure you that the board of the British merchant was to the full as richly served, and his reception as gratifying and noble. Mr. Bluck, sir, we will resume, if you please, that passage of Eutropius, which was interrupted by the late arrival of Master Osborne."

To this great man George's education was for some time intrusted. Amelia was bewildered by his phrases, but thought him a prodigy of learning. That poor widow made friends of Mrs. Veal, for reasons of her own. She liked to be in the house, and see Georgy coming to school there. She liked to be asked to Mrs. Veal's *conversazioni*, which took place once a month (as you were informed on pink cards, with "Athene" engraved on them), and where the professor welcomed his pupils and their friends to weak tea and scientific conversation. Poor little Amelia never missed one of these entertainments, and thought them delicious so long as she might have Georgy sitting by her. And she would walk from Brompton in any weather, and embrace Mrs. Veal with tearful gratitude for the delightful evening she had passed, when, the company having retired and Georgy gone off with Mr. Rowson, his attendant, poor Mrs. Osborne put on her cloaks and her shawls preparatory to walking home.

As for the learning which Georgy imbibed under

this valuable master of a hundred sciences, to judge from the weekly reports which the lad took home to his grandfather, his progress was remarkable. The names of a score or more of desirable branches of knowledge were printed in a table, and the pupil's progress in each was marked by the professor. In Greek Georgy was pronounced *aristos*, in Latin *optimus*, in French *très bien*, and so forth; and everybody had prizes for everything at the end of the year. Even Mr. Swartz, the woolly-headed young gentleman, and half-brother to the Honorable Mrs. McMull, and Mr. Bluck, the neglected young pupil of three-and-twenty from the agricultural districts, and that idle young scapegrace of a Master Todd before mentioned, received little eighteen-penny books, with "Athene" engraved on them, and a pompous Latin inscription from the Professor to his young friends.

The family of this Master Todd were hangers-on of the house of Osborne. The old gentleman had advanced Todd from being a clerk to be a junior partner in his establishment.

Mr. Osborne was the godfather of young Master Todd (who in subsequent life wrote Mr. Osborne Todd on his cards, and became a man of decided fashion), while Miss Osborne had accompanied Miss Maria Todd to the font, and gave her *protégée* a prayer-book, a collection of tracts, a volume of very low-church poetry, or some such memento of her goodness every year. Miss O. drove the Todds out in her carriage now and then: when they were ill, her footman, in large plush smalls and waistcoat, brought jellies and delicacies from Russell Square to Coram Street. Coram Street trembled and looked up to Russell Square indeed; and Mrs. Todd, who had a

pretty hand at cutting out paper trimmings for haunches of mutton, and could make flowers, ducks, etc., out of turnips and carrots in a very creditable manner, would go to "the Square," as it was called, and assist in the preparations incident to a great dinner, without even so much as thinking of sitting down to the banquet. If any guest failed at the eleventh hour, Todd was asked to dine. Mrs. Todd and Maria came across in the evening, slipped in with a muffled knock, and were in the drawing-room by the time Miss Osborne and the ladies under her convoy reached that apartment; and ready to fire off duets and sing until the gentlemen came up. Poor Maria Todd; poor young lady! How she had to work and thrum at these duets and sonatas in the Street, before they appeared in public in the Square!

Thus it seemed to be decreed by fate, that Georgy was to domineer over everybody with whom he came in contact, and that friends, relatives, and domestics were all to bow the knee before the little fellow. It must be owned that he accommodated himself very willingly to this arrangement. Most people do so. And Georgy liked to play the part of master, and perhaps had a natural aptitude for it.

In Russell Square everybody was afraid of Mr. Osborne, and Mr. Osborne was afraid of Georgy. The boy's dashing manners, and off-hand rattle about books and learning, his likeness to his father (dead unreconciled in Brussels yonder), awed the old gentleman, and gave the young boy the mastery. The old man would start at some hereditary feature or tone unconsciously used by the little lad, and fancy that George's father was again before him. He tried by indulgence to the grandson to make up for harshness to the elder George. People were surprised at his

gentleness to the boy. He growled and swore at Miss Osborne as usual: and would smile when George came down late for breakfast.

Miss Osborne, George's aunt, was a faded old spinster, broken down by more than forty years of dulness and coarse usage. It was easy for a lad of spirit to master *her*. And whenever George wanted anything from her, from the jam-pots in her cupboards, to the cracked and dry old colors in her paint-box (the old paint-box which she had had when she was a pupil of Mr. Smee, and was still almost young and blooming), Georgy took possession of the object of his desire, which obtained, he took no further notice of his aunt.

For his friends and cronies, he had a pompous old schoolmaster, who flattered him, and a toady, his senior, whom he could thrash. It was dear Mrs. Todd's delight to leave him with her youngest daughter, Rosa Jemima, a darling child of eight years old. The little pair looked so well together, she would say (but not to the folks in "the Square," we may be sure), — "Who knows what might happen? Don't they make a pretty little couple?" the fond mother thought.

The broken-spirited, old, maternal grandfather was likewise subject to the little tyrant. He could not help respecting a lad who had such fine clothes, and rode with a groom behind him. Georgy, on his side, was in the constant habit of hearing coarse abuse and vulgar satire levelled at John Sedley, by his pitiless old enemy, Mr. Osborne. Osborne used to call the other the old pauper, the old coal-man, the old bankrupt, and by many other such names of brutal contumely. How was little George to respect a man so prostrate? A few months after he was with his

paternal grandfather, Mrs. Sedley died. There had been little love between her and the child. He did not care to show much grief. He came down to visit his mother in a fine new suit of mourning, and was very angry that he could not go to a play upon which he had set his heart.

The illness of that old lady had been the occupation and perhaps the safeguard of Amelia. What do men know about women's martyrdoms? We should go mad had we to endure the hundredth part of those daily pains which are meekly borne by many women. Ceaseless slavery meeting with no reward; constant gentleness and kindness met by cruelty as constant; love, labor, patience, watchfulness, without even so much as the acknowledgment of a good word; all this, how many of them have to bear in quiet, and appear abroad with cheerful faces as if they felt nothing. Tender slaves that they are, they must needs be hypocrites and weak.

From her chair Amelia's mother had taken to her bed, which she had never left: and from which Mrs. Osborne herself was never absent except when she ran to see George. The old lady grudged her even those rare visits; she, who had been a kind, smiling, good-natured mother once, in the days of her prosperity, but whom poverty and infirmities had broken down. Her illness or estrangement did not affect Amelia. They rather enabled her to support the other calamity under which she was suffering, and from the thoughts of which she was kept by the ceaseless calls of the invalid. Amelia bore her harshness quite gently; smoothed the uneasy pillow; was always ready with a soft answer to the watchful, querulous voice; soothed the sufferer with words of hope, such as her pious simple heart could best feel

and utter, and closed the eyes that had once looked so tenderly upon her.

Then all her time and tenderness were devoted to the consolation and comfort of the bereaved old father, who was stunned by the blow which had befallen him, and stood utterly alone in the world. His wife, his honor, his fortune, everything he loved best had fallen away from him. There was only Amelia to stand by and support with her gentle arms the tottering, heart-broken, old man. We are not going to write the history: it would be too dreary and stupid. I can see Vanity Fair yawning over it *d'avance*.

One day as the young gentlemen were assembled in the study at the Rev. Mr. Veal's, and the domestic Chaplain to the Right Honorable the Earl of Bareacres was spouting away as usual — a smart carriage drove up to the door decorated with the statue of Athene, and two gentlemen stepped out. The young Masters Bangles rushed to the window, with a vague notion that their father might have arrived from Bombay. The great hulking scholar of three-and-twenty, who was crying secretly over a passage of Eutropius, flattened his neglected nose against the panes, and looked at the drag, as the *laquais de place* sprang from the box and let out the persons in the carriage.

"It's a fat one and a thin one," Mr. Bluck said, as a thundering knock came to the door.

Everybody was interested, from the domestic Chaplain himself, who hoped he saw the fathers of some future pupils, down to Master Georgy, glad of any pretext for laying his book down.

The boy in the shabby livery, with the faded copper-buttons, who always thrust himself into the tight coat to open the door, came into the study and said, "Two

gentlemen want to see Master Osborne." The Professor had had a trifling altercation in the morning with that young gentleman, owing to a difference about the introduction of crackers in school-time; but his face resumed its habitual expression of bland courtesy, as he said, "Master Osborne, I give you full permission to go and see your carriage friends, — to whom I beg you to convey the respectful compliments of myself and Mrs. Veal."

Georgy went into the reception-room, and saw two strangers, whom he looked at with his head up, in his usual haughty manner. One was fat, with mustachios, and the other was lean and long, in a blue frock-coat, with a brown face, and a grizzled head.

"My God, how like he is!" said the long gentleman, with a start. "Can you guess who we are, George?"

The boy's face flushed up, as it did usually when he was moved, and his eyes brightened. "I don't know the other," he said, "but I should think you must be Major Dobbin."

Indeed it was our old friend. His voice trembled with pleasure as he greeted the boy, and taking both the other's hands in his own, drew the lad to him.

"Your mother has talked to you about me — has she?" he said.

"That she has," Georgy answered, "hundreds and hundreds of times."

CHAPTER III.

EOTHEN.

It was one of the many causes for personal pride with which old Osborne chose to recreate himself, that Sedley, his ancient rival, enemy, and benefactor, was in his last days so utterly defeated and humiliated, as to be forced to accept pecuniary obligations at the hands of the man who had most injured and insulted him. The successful man of the world cursed the old pauper, and relieved him from time to time. As he furnished George with money for his mother, he gave the boy to understand by hints, delivered in his brutal, coarse way, that George's maternal grandfather was but a wretched old bankrupt and dependant, and that John Sedley might thank the man to whom he already owed ever so much money, for the aid which his generosity now chose to administer. George carried the pompous supplies to his mother and the shattered old widower whom it was now the main business of her life to tend and comfort. The little fellow patronized the feeble and disappointed old man.

It may have shown a want of "proper pride" in Amelia that she chose to accept these money benefits at the hands of her father's enemy. But proper pride and this poor lady had never had much acquaintance together. A disposition naturally simple and demanding protection; a long course of poverty and humility, of daily privations, and hard words, of kind offices and no returns, had been her lot ever since womanhood

almost, or since her luckless marriage with George Osborne. You who see your betters, bearing up under this shame every day, meekly suffering under the slights of fortune, gentle and unpitied, poor, and rather despised for their poverty, do you ever step down from your prosperity and wash the feet of these poor wearied beggars? The very thought of them is odious and low. "There must be classes — there must be rich and poor," Dives says, smacking his claret — (it is well if he even sends the broken meat out to Lazarus sitting under the window). Very true; but think how mysterious and often unaccountable it is — that lottery of life which gives to this man the purple and fine linen, and sends to the other rags for garments and dogs for comforters.

So I must own, that without much repining, on the contrary, with something akin to gratitude, Amelia took the crumbs that her father-in-law let drop now and then and with them fed her own parent. Directly she understood it to be her duty, it was this young woman's nature (ladies, she is but thirty still, and we choose to call her a young woman even at that age) — it was, I say, her nature to sacrifice herself and to fling all that she had at the feet of the beloved object. During what long thankless nights had she worked out her fingers for little Georgy whilst at home with her; what buffets, scorns, privations, poverties had she endured for father and mother! And in the midst of all these solitary resignations and unseen sacrifices, she did not respect herself any more than the world respected her; but I believe thought in her heart that she was a poor-spirited, despicable little creature, whose luck in life was only too good for her merits. O you poor women! O you poor secret martyrs and victims, whose life is a torture, who are stretched on

racks in your bed-rooms, and who lay your heads down on the block daily at the drawing-room table; every man who watches your pains, or peers into those dark places where the torture is administered to you, must pity you — and — and thank God that he has a beard. I recollect seeing, years ago, at the prisons for idiots and madmen at Bicêtre, near Paris, a poor wretch bent down under the bondage of his imprisonment and his personal infirmity, to whom one of our party gave a half pennyworth of snuff in a *cornet* or "screw" of paper. The kindness was too much for the poor epileptic creature. He cried in an anguish of delight and gratitude: if anybody gave you and me a thousand a year, or saved our lives, we could not be so affected. And so, if you properly tyrannize over a woman, you will find a halfp'orth of kindness act upon her, and bring tears into her eyes, as though you were an angel benefiting her.

Some such boons as these were the best which Fortune allotted to poor little Amelia. Her life, begun not unprosperously, had come down to this — to a mean prison and a long, ignoble bondage. Little George visited her captivity sometimes, and consoled it with feeble gleams of encouragement. Russell Square was the boundary of her prison: she might walk thither occasionally, but was always back to sleep in her cell at night; to perform cheerless duties; to watch by thankless sick-beds; to suffer the harassment and tyranny of querulous disappointed old age. How many thousands of people are there, women for the most part, who are doomed to endure this long slavery? — who are hospital nurses without wages, — sisters of Charity, if you like, without the romance and the sentiment of sacrifice, — who strive, fast, watch, and suffer, unpitied; and fade away ignobly and

unknown. The hidden and awful wisdom which apportions the destinies of mankind is pleased so to humiliate and cast down the tender, good, and wise; and to set up the selfish, the foolish, or the wicked. Oh, be humble, my brother, in your prosperity! Be gentle with those who are less lucky, if not more deserving. Think, what right have you to be scornful, whose virtue is a deficiency of temptation, whose success may be a chance, whose rank may be an ancestor's accident, whose prosperity is very likely a satire.

They buried Amelia's mother in the church-yard at Brompton; upon just such a rainy, dark day, as Amelia recollected when first she had been there to marry George. Her little boy sat by her side in pompous new sables. She remembered the old pew-woman and clerk. Her thoughts were away in other times as the parson read. But that she held George's hand in her own, perhaps she would have liked to change places with . . . Then, as usual, she felt ashamed of her selfish thoughts, and prayed inwardly to be strengthened to do her duty.

So she determined with all her might and strength to try and make her old father happy. She slaved, toiled, patched, and mended, sang and played backgammon, read out the newspaper, cooked dishes, for old Sedley, walked him out sedulously into Kensington Gardens or the Brompton Lanes, listened to his stories with untiring smiles and affectionate hypocrisy, or sat musing by his side and communing with her own thoughts and reminiscences, as the old man, feeble and querulous, sunned himself on the garden benches and prattled about his wrongs or his sorrows. What sad, unsatisfactory thoughts those of the widow were! The children running up and down the slopes

and broad paths in the gardens, reminded her of George who was taken from her: the first George was taken from her: her selfish, guilty love, in both instances, had been rebuked and bitterly chastised. She strove to think it was right that she should be so punished. She was such a miserable wicked sinner. She was quite alone in the world.

I know that the account of this kind of solitary imprisonment is insufferably tedious, unless there is some cheerful or humorous incident to enliven it, — a tender gaoler, for instance, or a waggish commandant of the fortress, or a mouse to come out and play about Latude's beard and whiskers, or a subterranean passage under the castle, dug by Trenck with his nails and a toothpick: the historian has no such enlivening incident to relate in the narrative of Amelia's captivity. Fancy her, if you please, during this period, very sad, but always ready to smile when spoken to; in a very mean, poor, not to say vulgar position of life; singing songs, making puddings, playing cards, mending stockings, for her old father's benefit. So, never mind, whether she be a heroine or no; or you and I, however old, scolding and bankrupt; — may we have in our last days a kind soft shoulder on which to lean, and a gentle hand to soothe our gouty old pillows.

Old Sedley grew very fond of his daughter after his wife's death; and Amelia had her consolation in doing her duty by the old man.

But we are not going to leave these two people long in such a low and ungenteel station of life. Better days, as far as worldly prosperity went, were in store for both. Perhaps the ingenious reader has guessed who was the stout gentleman who called upon Georgy at his school in company with our old friend Major Dobbin. It was another old acquaintance returned

to England, and at a time when his presence was likely to be of great comfort to his relatives there.

Major Dobbin having easily succeeded in getting leave from his good-natured commandant to proceed to Madras, and thence probably to Europe, on urgent private affairs, never ceased travelling night and day until he reached his journey's end, and had directed his march with such celerity, that he arrived at Madras in a high fever. His servants who accompanied him, brought him to the house of the friend with whom he had resolved to stay until his departure for Europe in a state of delirium: and it was thought for many, many days that he would never travel farther than the burying-ground of the church of St. George's, where the troops should fire a salvo over his grave, and where many a gallant officer lies far away from his home.

Here, as the poor fellow lay tossing in his fever, the people who watched him might have heard him raving about Amelia. The idea that he should never see her again depressed him in his lucid hours. He thought his last day was come; and he made his solemn preparations for departure: setting his affairs in this world in order, and leaving the little property of which he was possessed to those whom he most desired to benefit. The friend in whose house he was located witnessed his testament. He desired to be buried with a little brown hair-chain which he wore round his neck, and which, if the truth must be known, he had got from Amelia's maid at Brussels, when the young widow's hair was cut off, during the fever which prostrated her after the death of George Osborne on the plateau at Mount St. John.

He recovered, rallied, relapsed again, having undergone such a process of blood-letting and calomel as

showed the strength of his original constitution. He was almost a skeleton when they put him on board the Ramchunder East Indiaman, Captain Bragg, from Calcutta, touching at Madras; and so weak and prostrate, that his friend who had tended him through his illness, prophesied that the honest Major would never survive the voyage, and that he would pass some morning, shrouded in flag and hammock, over the ship's side, and carrying down to the sea with him the relic that he wore at his heart. But whether it was the sea air, or the hope which sprung up in him afresh, from the day that the ship spread her canvas and stood out of the roads towards *home*, our friend began to amend, and he was quite well (though as gaunt as a greyhound) before they reached the Cape. "Kirk will be disappointed of his majority this time," he said, with a smile: "he will expect to find himself gazetted by the time the regiment reaches home." For it must be premised that while the Major was lying ill at Madras, having made such prodigious haste to go thither, the gallant — th, which had passed many years abroad, which after its return from the West Indies had been baulked of its stay at home by the Waterloo campaign, and had been ordered from Flanders to India, had received orders home; and the Major might have accompanied his comrades, had he chosen to wait for their arrival at Madras.

Perhaps he was not inclined to put himself in his exhausted state again under the guardianship of Glorvina. "I think Miss O'Dowd would have done for me," he said, laughingly, to a fellow-passenger, "if we had had her on board, and when she had sunk me, she would have fallen upon you, depend upon it, and carried you in as a prize to Southampton, Jos, my boy."

For indeed it was no other than our stout friend who was also a passenger on board the Ramchunder. He had passed ten years in Bengal. — Constant dinners, tiffins, pale ale and claret, the prodigious labor of cutcherry, and the refreshment of brandy-pawnee which he was forced to take there, had their effect upon Waterloo Sedley. A voyage to Europe was pronounced necessary for him — and having served his full time in India, and had fine appointments which had enabled him to lay by a considerable sum of money, he was free to come home and stay with a good pension, or to return and resume that rank in the service to which his seniority and his vast talents entitled him.

He was rather thinner than when we last saw him, but had gained in majesty and solemnity of demeanor. He had resumed the mustachios to which his services at Waterloo entitled him, and swaggered about on deck in a magnificent velvet cap with a gold band, and a profuse ornamentation of pins and jewelry about his person. He took breakfast in his cabin, and dressed as solemnly to appear on the quarter-deck, as if he were going to turn out for Bond Street, or the Course at Calcutta. He brought a native servant with him, who was his valet and pipe-bearer; and who wore the Sedley crest in silver on his turban. That oriental menial had a wretched life under the tyranny of Jos Sedley. Jos was as vain of his person as a woman, and took as long a time at his toilette as any fading beauty. The youngsters among the passengers, Young Chaffers of the 150th, and poor little Ricketts, coming home after his third fever, used to draw out Sedley at the cuddy-table, and make him tell prodigious stories about himself and his exploits against tigers and Napoleon. He was great when he visited

the Emperor's tomb at Longwood, when to these gentlemen and the young officers of the ship, Major Dobbin not being by, he described the whole battle of Waterloo, and all but announced that Napoleon never would have gone to St. Helena at all but for him, Jos Sedley.

After leaving St. Helena he became very generous, disposing of a great quantity of ship stores, claret, preserved meats, and great casks packed with soda-water, brought out for his private delectation. There were no ladies on board: the Major gave the *pas* of precedency to the civilian, so that he was the first dignitary at table; and treated by Captain Bragg, and the officers of the Ramchunder, with the respect which his rank warranted. He disappeared rather in a panic during a two-days' gale, in which he had the portholes of his cabin battened down; and remained in his cot reading the "Washerwoman of Finchley Common," left on board the Ramchunder by the Right Honorable the Lady Emily Hornblower, wife of the Rev. Silas Hornblower, when on their passage out to the Cape, where the Reverend gentleman was a missionary: but, for common reading, he had brought a stock of novels and plays which he lent to the rest of the ship, and rendered himself agreeable to all by his kindness and condescension.

Many and many a night as the ship was cutting through the roaring dark sea, the moon and stars shining over head, and the bell singing out the watch, Mr. Sedley and the Major would sit on the quarter-deck of the vessel talking about home, as the Major smoked his cheroot, and the civilian puffed at the hookah which his servant prepared for him.

In these conversations it was wonderful with what perseverance and ingenuity Major Dobbin would

manage to bring the talk round to the subject of Amelia and her little boy. Jos, a little testy about his father's misfortunes and unceremonious applications to him, was soothed down by the Major, who pointed out the elder's ill fortunes and old age. He would not perhaps like to live with the old couple: whose ways and hours might not agree with those of a younger man, accustomed to different society (Jos bowed at this compliment): but, the Major pointed out, how advantageous it would be for Jos Sedley to have a house of his own in London, and not a mere bachelor's establishment as before: how his sister Amelia would be the very person to preside over it; how elegant, how gentle she was, and of what refined good manners. He recounted stories of the success which Mrs. George Osborne had had in former days at Brussels, and in London, where she was much admired by people of very great fashion: and he then hinted how becoming it would be for Jos to send Georgy to a good school and make a man of him; for his mother and her parents would be sure to spoil him. In a word, this artful Major made the civilian promise to take charge of Amelia and her unprotected child. He did not know as yet what events had happened in the little Sedley family: and how death had removed the mother, and riches had carried off George from Amelia. But the fact is, that every day and always, this love-smitten and middle-aged gentleman was thinking about Mrs. Osborne, and his whole heart was bent upon doing her good. He coaxed, wheedled, cajoled, and complimented Jos Sedley with a perseverance and cordiality of which he was not aware himself, very likely; but some men who have unmarried sisters or daughters even, may remember how uncommonly agreeable gentlemen are to the

male relations when they are courting the females; and perhaps this rogue of a Dobbin was urged by a similar hypocrisy.

The truth is, when Major Dobbin came on board the Ramchunder, very sick, and for the three days she lay in the Madras Roads, he did not begin to rally, nor did even the appearance and recognition of his old acquaintance, Mr. Sedley, on board much cheer him, until after a conversation which they had one day, as the Major was laid languidly on the deck. He said then he thought he was doomed; he had left a little something to his godson in his will; and he trusted Mrs. Osborne would remember him kindly, and be happy in the marriage she was about to make. "Married? not the least," Jos answered: "he had heard from her: she made no mention of the marriage, and by the way, it was curious, she wrote to say that Major Dobbin was going to be married, and hoped that *he* would be happy." What were the dates of Sedley's letters from Europe? The civilian fetched them. They were two months later than the Major's; and the ship's surgeon congratulated himself upon the treatment adopted by him towards his new patient, who had been consigned to ship-board by the Madras practitioner with very small hopes indeed; for, from that day, the very day that he changed the draught, Major Dobbin began to mend. And thus it was that deserving officer, Captain Kirk, was disappointed of his majority.

After they passed St. Helena, Major Dobbin's gayety and strength was such as to astonish all his fellow-passengers. He larked with the midshipmen, played single-stick with the mates, ran up the shrouds like a boy, sang a comic song one night to the amusement of the whole party assembled over their grog

after supper, and rendered himself so gay, lively, and amiable, that even Captain Bragg, who thought there was nothing in his passenger, and considered he was a poor-spirited feller at first, was constrained to own that the Major was a reserved but well-informed and meritorious officer. "He ain't got distangy manners, dammy," Bragg observed to his first mate; "he would n't do at Government House, Roper, where his Lordship and Lady William was as kind to me, and shook hands with me before the whole company, and asking me at dinner to take beer with him, before the Commander-in-Chief himself; he ain't got manners, but there 's something about him — " And thus Captain Bragg showed that he possessed discrimination as a man, as well as ability as a commander.

But a calm taking place when the Ramchunder was within ten days' sail of England, Dobbin became so impatient and ill-humored as to surprise those comrades who had before admired his vivacity and good temper. He did not recover until the breeze sprang up again, and was in a highly excited state when the pilot came on board. Good God, how his heart beat as the two friendly spires of Southampton came in sight.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR FRIEND THE MAJOR.

Our Major had rendered himself so popular on board the Ramchunder, that when he and Mr. Sedley descended into the welcome shore-boat which was to take them from the ship, the whole crew, men and officers, the great Captain Bragg himself leading off, gave three cheers for Major Dobbin, who blushed very much, and ducked his head in token of thanks. Jos, who very likely thought the cheers were for himself, took off his gold-laced cap and waved it majestically to his friends, and they were pulled to shore and landed with great dignity at the pier, whence they proceeded to the Royal George Hotel.

Although the sight of that magnificent round of beef, and the silver tankard suggestive of real British home-brewed ale and porter, which perennially greet the eyes of the traveller returning from foreign parts, who enters the coffee-room of the George, are so invigorating and delightful, that a man entering such a comfortable snug homely English inn, might well like to stop some days there, yet Dobbin began to talk about a post-chaise instantly, and was no sooner at Southampton than he wished to be on the road to London. Jos, however, would not hear of moving that evening. Why was he to pass a night in a post-chaise instead of a great large undulating downy feather-bed which was there ready to replace the horrid little narrow crib in which the portly Bengal gentleman had been confined during the voyage? He could

MR. JOS'S HOOKAHBADAR.

not think of moving till his baggage was cleared, or of travelling until he could do so with his chillum. So the Major was forced to wait over that night, and despatched a letter to his family announcing his arrival; entreating from Jos a promise to write to his own friends. Jos promised, but did n't keep his promise. The Captain, the surgeon, and one or two passengers came and dined with our two gentlemen at the inn; Jos exerting himself in a sumptuous way in ordering the dinner: and promising to go to town the next day with the Major. The landlord said it did his eyes good to see Mr. Sedley take off his first pint of porter. If I had time and dared to enter into digressions, I would write a chapter about that first pint of porter drunk upon English ground. Ah, how good it is! It is worth while to leave home for a year, just to enjoy that one draught.

Major Dobbin made his appearance the next morning very neatly shaved and dressed, according to his wont. Indeed, it was so early in the morning, that nobody was up in the house except that wonderful Boots of an inn who never seems to want sleep: and the Major could hear the snores of the various inmates of the house roaring through the corridors as he creaked about in those dim passages. Then the sleepless Boots went shirking round from door to door, gathering up at each the Bluchers, Wellingtons, Oxonians, which stood outside. Then Jos's native servant arose and began to get ready his master's ponderous dressing apparatus, and prepare his hookah: then the maid-servants got up, and meeting the dark man in the passages, shrieked, and mistook him for the devil. He and Dobbin stumbled over their pails in the passages as they were scouring the decks of the Royal George. When the first

unshorn waiter appeared and unbarred the door of the inn, the Major thought that the time for departure was arrived, and ordered a post-chaise to be fetched instantly, that they might set off.

He then directed his steps to Mr. Sedley's room, and opened the curtains of the great large family bed wherein Mr. Jos was snoring. "Come, up! Sedley," the Major said, "it's time to be off; the chaise will be at the door in half an hour."

Jos growled from under the counterpane to know what the time was; but when he at last extorted from the blushing Major (who never told fibs, however they might be to his advantage) what was the real hour of the morning, he broke out into a volley of bad language, which we will not repeat here, but by which he gave Dobbin to understand that he would jeopardy his soul if he got up at that moment, that the Major might go and be hanged, that he would not travel with Dobbin, and that it was most unkind and ungentlemanlike to disturb a man out of his sleep in that way; on which the discomfited Major was obliged to retreat, leaving Jos to resume his interrupted slumbers.

The chaise came up presently, and the Major would wait no longer.

If he had been an English nobleman travelling on a pleasure tour, or a newspaper courier bearing despatches (government messages are generally carried much more quietly), he could not have travelled more quickly. The post-boys wondered at the fees he flung amongst them. How happy and green the country looked as the chaise whirled rapidly from mile-stone to mile-stone, through neat country towns where landlords came out to welcome him with smiles and bows; by pretty road-side inns, where the signs hung on the

elms, and horses and wagoners were drinking under the checkered shadow of the trees; by old halls and parks; rustic hamlets clustered round ancient gray churches — and through the charming friendly English landscape. Is there any in the world like it? To a traveller returning home it looks so kind — it seems to shake hands with you as you pass through it. Well, Major Dobbin passed through all this from Southampton to London, and without noting much beyond the mile-stones along the road. You see he was so eager to see his parents at Camberwell.

He grudged the time lost between Piccadilly and his old haunt at the Slaughters', whither he drove faithfully. Long years had passed since he saw it last, since he and George, as young men, had enjoyed many a feast, and held many a revel there. He had now passed into the stage of old-fellowhood. His hair was grizzled, and many a passion and feeling of his youth had grown gray in that interval. There, however, stood the old waiter at the door, in the same greasy black suit, with the same double chin and flaccid face, with the same huge bunch of seals at his fob, rattling his money in his pockets as before, and receiving the Major as if he had gone away only a week ago. "Put the Major's things in twenty-three, that's his room," John said, exhibiting not the least surprise. "Roast fowl for your dinner, I suppose. You ain't got married? They said you was married — the Scotch surgeon of yours was here. No, it was Captain Humby of the Thirty-third, as was quartered with the — th in Injee. Like any warm water? What do you come in a chay for — ain't the coach good enough?" And with this, the faithful waiter, who knew and remembered every officer who used the house, and with whom ten years were but as yesterday, led the way up

to Dobbin's old room, where stood the great moreen bed, and the shabby carpet, a thought more dingy, and all the old black furniture covered with faded chintz, just as the Major recollected them in his youth.

He remembered George pacing up and down the room, and biting his nails, and swearing that the Governor must come round, and that if he did n't, he did n't care a straw, on the day before he was married. He could fancy him walking in, banging the door of Dobbin's room, and his own hard by —

"You ain't got young," John said, calmly surveying his friend of former days.

Dobbin laughed. "Ten years and a fever don't make a man young, John," he said. "It is you that are always young: — No, you are always old."

"What became of Captain Osborne's widow?" John said. "Fine young fellow that. Lord, how he used to spend his money. He never came back after that day he was married from here. He owes me three pound at this minute. Look here, I have it in my book. 'April 10, 1815, Captain Osborne: 3*l*.' I wonder whether his father would pay me," and so saying, John of the Slaughters' pulled out the very morocco pocket-book in which he had noted his loan to the Captain, upon a greasy faded page still extant, with many other scrawled memoranda regarding the bygone frequenters of the house.

Having inducted his customer into the room, John retired with perfect calmness; and Major Dobbin, not without a blush and a grin at his own absurdity, chose out of his kit the very smartest and most becoming civil costume he possessed, and laughed at his own tanned face and gray hair, as he surveyed them in the dreary little toilette-glass on the dressing-table.

"I 'm glad old John did n't forget me," he thought.

"She 'll know me, too, I hope." And he sallied out of the inn, bending his steps once more in the direction of Brompton.

Every minute incident of his last meeting with Amelia was present to the constant man's mind as he walked towards her house. The arch and the Achilles statue were up since he had last been in Piccadilly; a hundred changes had occurred which his eye and mind vaguely noted. He began to tremble as he walked up the lane from Brompton, that well-remembered lane leading to the street where she lived. Was she going to be married or not? If he were to meet her with the little boy — Good God, what should he do? He saw a woman coming to him with a child of five years old — was that she? He began to shake at the mere possibility. When he came up to the row of houses, at last, where she lived, and to the gate, he caught hold of it and paused. He might have heard the thumping of his own heart. "May God Almighty bless her, whatever has happened," he thought to himself. "Psha! she may be gone from here," he said, and went in through the gate.

The window of the parlor which she used to occupy was open, and there were no inmates in the room. The Major thought he recognized the piano, though, with the picture over it, as it used to be in former days, and his perturbations were renewed. Mr. Clapp's brass plate was still on the door, at the knocker of which Dobbin performed a summons.

A buxom-looking lass of sixteen, with bright eyes and purple cheeks, came to answer the knock, and looked hard at the Major as he leaned back against the little porch.

He was as pale as a ghost, and could hardly falter out the words — "Does Mrs. Osborne live here?"

She looked him hard in the face for a moment — and then turning white too — said, "Lord bless me — it's Major Dobbin." She held out both her hands shaking — "Don't you remember me?" she said. "I used to call you Major Sugarplums." On which, and I believe it was for the first time that he ever so conducted himself in his life, the Major took the girl in his arms and kissed her. She began to laugh and cry hysterically, and calling out "Ma, Pa!" with all her voice, brought up those worthy people, who had already been surveying the Major from the casement of the ornamental kitchen, and were astonished to find their daughter in the little passage in the embrace of a great tall man in a blue frock-coat and white duck trousers.

"I 'm an old friend," he said — not without blushing though. "Don't you remember me, Mrs. Clapp, and those good cakes you used to make for tea? — Don't you recollect me, Clapp? I 'm George's godfather, and just come back from India." A great shaking of hands ensued — Mrs. Clapp was greatly affected and delighted; she called upon Heaven to interpose a vast many times in that passage.

The landlord and landlady of the house led the worthy Major into the Sedleys' room (whereof he remembered every single article of furniture, from the old brass ornamented piano, once a natty little instrument, Stothard maker, to the screens and the alabaster miniature tombstone, in the midst of which ticked Mr. Sedley's gold watch), and there as he sat down in the lodger's vacant arm-chair, the father, the mother, and the daughter, with a thousand ejaculatory breaks in the narrative, informed Major Dobbin of what we know already, but of particulars in Amelia's history of which he was not aware — namely of Mrs. Sedley's

death, of George's reconcilement with his grandfather Osborne, of the way in which the widow took on at leaving him, and of other particulars of her life. Twice or thrice he was going to ask about the marriage question, but his heart failed him. He did not care to lay it bare to these people. Finally, he was informed that Mrs. O. was gone to walk with her pa in Kensington Gardens, whither she always went with the old gentleman (who was very weak and peevish now, and led her a sad life, though she behaved to him like an angel, to be sure), of a fine afternoon after dinner.

"I'm very much pressed for time," the Major said, "and have business to-night of importance. I should like to see Mrs. Osborne tho'. Suppose Miss Polly would come with me and show me the way."

Miss Polly was charmed and astonished at this proposal. She knew the way. She would show Major Dobbin. She had often been with Mr. Sedley when Mrs. O. was gone — was gone Russell Square way: and knew the bench where he liked to sit. She bounced away to her apartment, and appeared presently in her best bonnet and her mamma's yellow shawl and large pebble brooch, of which she assumed the loan in order to make herself a worthy companion for the Major.

That officer, then, in his blue frock-coat and buckskin gloves, gave the young lady his arm, and they walked away very gayly. He was glad to have a friend at hand for the scene which he dreaded somehow. He asked a thousand more questions from his companion about Amelia: his kind heart grieved to think that she should have had to part with her son. How did she bear it? Did she see him often? Was Mr. Sedley pretty comfortable now in a worldly point

of view? Polly answered all these questions of Major Sugarplums to the very best of her power.

And in the midst of their walk an incident occurred which, though very simple in its nature, was productive of the greatest delight to Major Dobbin. A pale young man with feeble whiskers and a stiff white neckcloth came walking down the lane, *en sandwich*:— having a lady, that is, on each arm. One was a tall and commanding middle-aged female, with features and a complexion similar to those of the clergyman of the Church of England by whose side she marched, and the other a stunted little woman with a dark face, ornamented by a fine new bonnet and white ribbons, and in a smart pelisse with a rich gold watch in the midst of her person. The gentleman, pinioned as he was by these two ladies, carried further a parasol, shawl, and basket, so that his arms were entirely engaged, and of course he was unable to touch his hat in acknowledgment of the curtsy with which Miss Mary Clapp greeted him.

He merely bowed his head in reply to her salutation, which the two ladies returned with a patronizing air, and at the same time looking severely at the individual in the blue coat and bamboo cane, who accompanied Miss Polly.

"Who's that?" asked the Major, amused by the group, and after he had made way for the three to pass up the lane. Mary looked at him rather roguishly.

"That is our curate, the Reverend Mr. Binny (a twitch from Major Dobbin), and his sister Miss B. Lord bless us, how she did use to worret us at Sunday-school; and the other lady, the little one with a cast in her eye, and the handsome watch, is Mrs. Binny— Miss Grits that was; her pa was a grocer, and kept

the Little Original Gold Tea Pot in Kensington Gravel Pits. They were married last month, and are just come back from Margate. She's five thousand pound to her fortune; but her and Miss B., who made the match, have quarrelled already."

If the Major had twitched before, he started now, and slapped the bamboo on the grouud with an emphasis which made Miss Clapp cry "Law," and laugh too. He stood for a moment silent with open mouth looking after the retreating young couple, while Miss Mary told their history; but he did not hear beyond the announcement of the reverend gentleman's marriage; his head was swimming with felicity. After this rencontre he began to walk double quick toward the place of his destination; and yet they were too soon (for he was in a great tremor at the idea of a meeting for which he had been longing any time these ten years)—through the Brompton lanes, and entering at the little old portal in Kensington Garden wall.

"There they are," said Miss Polly, and she felt him again start back on her arm. She was a confidante at once of the whole business. She knew the story as well as if she had read it in one of her favorite novel-books—"Fatherless Fanny," or the "Scottish Chiefs."

"Suppose you were to run on and tell her," the Major said. Polly ran forward, her yellow shawl streaming in the breeze.

Old Sedley was seated on a bench, his handkerchief placed over his knees, prattling away according to his wont, with some old story about old times, to which Amelia had listened, and awarded a patient smile many a time before. She could of late think of her own affairs, and smile or make other marks of recognition of her father's stories, scarcely hearing

a word of the old man's tales. As Mary came bouncing along, and Amelia caught sight of her, she started up from her bench. Her first thought was, that something had happened to Georgy; but the sight of the messenger's eager and happy face dissipated that fear in the timorous mother's bosom.

"News! News!" cried the emissary of Major Dobbin. "He's come! He's come!"

"Who is come?" said Emmy, still thinking of her son.

"Look there," answered Miss Clapp, turning round and pointing; in which direction Amelia looking, saw Dobbin's lean figure and long shadow stalking across the grass. Amelia started in her turn, blushed up, and, of course, began to cry. At all this simple little creature's fêtes, the *grandes eaux* were accustomed to play.

He looked at her — oh, how fondly — as she came running toward him, her hands before her, ready to give them to him. She was n't changed. She was a little pale; a little stouter in figure. Her eyes were the same, the kind trustful eyes. There were scarce three lines of silver in her soft brown hair. She gave him both her hands as she looked up flushing and smiling through her tears into his honest homely face. He took the two little hands between his two, and held them there. He was speechless for a moment. Why did he not take her in his arms, and swear that he would never leave her? She must have yielded: she could not but have obeyed him.

"I — I 've another arrival to announce," he said, after a pause.

"Mrs. Dobbin?" Amelia said, making a movement back — Why did n't he speak?

"No," he said, letting her hands go: "Who has told

you those lies? — I mean, your brother Jos came in the same ship with me, and is come home to make you all happy."

"Papa, papa!" Emmy cried out, "here are news! My brother is in England. He is come to take care of you. — Here is Major Dobbin."

Mr. Sedley started up, shaking a great deal, and gathering up his thoughts. Then he stepped forward and made an old-fashioned bow to the Major, whom he called Mr. Dobbin, and hoped his worthy father, Sir William, was quite well. He proposed to call upon Sir William, who had done him the honor of a visit a short time ago. Sir William had not called upon the old gentleman for eight years — it was that visit he was thinking of returning.

"He is very much shaken," Emmy whispered, as Dobbin went up and cordially shook hands with the old man.

Although he had such particular business in London that evening, the Major consented to forego it upon Mr. Sedley's invitation to him to come home and partake of tea. Amelia put her arm under that of her young friend with the yellow shawl, and headed the party on their return homewards, so that Mr. Sedley fell to Dobbin's share. The old man walked very slowly, and told a number of ancient histories about himself and his poor Bessy, his former prosperity, and his bankruptcy. His thoughts, as is usual with failing old men, were quite in former times. The present, with the exception of the one catastrophe which he felt, he knew little about. The Major was glad to let him talk on. His eyes were fixed upon the figure in front of him — the dear little figure always present to his imagination and in his prayers, and visiting his dreams wakeful or slumbering.

Amelia was very happy, smiling, and active all that evening; performing her duties as hostess of the little entertainment with the utmost grace and propriety, as Dobbin thought. His eyes followed her about as they sat in the twilight. How many a time had he longed for that moment, and thought of her far away under hot winds and in weary marches, gentle and happy, kindly ministering to the wants of old age, and decorating poverty with sweet submission — as he saw her now. I do not say that his taste was the highest, or that it is the duty of great intellects to be content with a bread-and-butter paradise, such as sufficed our simple old friend; but his desires were of this sort whether for good or bad; and, with Amelia to help him, he was as ready to drink as many cups of tea as Dr. Johnson.

Amelia seeing this propensity, laughingly encouraged it; and looked exceedingly roguish as she administered to him cup after cup. It is true she did not know that the Major had had no dinner, and that the cloth was laid for him at the Slaughters', and a plate laid thereon to mark that the table was retained, in that very box in which the Major and George had sat many a time carousing, when she was a child just come home from Miss Pinkerton's school.

The first thing Mrs. Osborne showed the Major was Georgy's miniature, for which she ran up stairs on her arrival at home. It was not half handsome enough of course for the boy, but was n't it noble of him to think of bringing it to his mother? Whilst her papa was awake she did not talk much about Georgy. To hear about Mr. Osborne and Russell Square was not agreeable to the old man, who very likely was unconscious that he had been living for some months past mainly on the bounty of his richer

rival; and lost his temper if allusion was made to the other.

Dobbin told him all, and a little more perhaps than all, that had happened on board the "Ramchunder;" and exaggerated Jos's benevolent dispositions towards his father, and resolution to make him comfortable in his old days. The truth is, that during the voyage the Major had impressed this duty most strongly upon his fellow passenger and extorted promises from him that he would take charge of his sister and her child. He soothed Jos's irritation with regard to the bills which the old gentleman had drawn upon him, gave a laughing account of his own sufferings on the same score, and of the famous consignment of wine with which the old man had favored him: and brought Mr. Jos, who was by no means an ill-natured person when well pleased and moderately flattered, to a very good state of feeling regarding his relatives in Europe.

And in fine I am ashamed to say that the Major stretched the truth so far as to tell old Mr. Sedley that it was mainly a desire to see his parent which brought Jos once more to Europe.

At his accustomed hour Mr. Sedley began to doze in his chair, and then it was Amelia's opportunity to commence her conversation, which she did with great eagerness; — it related exclusively to Georgy. She did not talk at all about her own sufferings at breaking from him, for indeed this worthy woman, though she was half-killed by the separation from the child, yet thought it was very wicked in her to repine at losing him; but everything concerning him, his virtues, talents, and prospects, she poured out. She described his angelic beauty; narrated a hundred instances of his generosity and greatness of mind

whilst living with her: how a Royal Duchess had stopped and admired him in Kensington Gardens; how splendidly he was cared for now, and how he had a groom and a pony; what quickness and cleverness he had, and what a prodigiously well-read and delightful person the Rev. Lawrence Veal was, George's master. "He knows *everything*," Amelia said. "He has the most delightful parties. You who are so learned yourself, and have read so much, and are so clever and accomplished — don't shake your head and say no — *he* always used to say you were — you will be charmed with Mr. Veal's parties. The last Tuesday in every month. He says there is no place in the bar or the senate that Georgy may not aspire to. Look here," and she went to the piano-drawer and drew out a theme of Georgy's composition. This great effort of genius, which is still in the possession of George's mother, is as follows: —

On Selfishness. — Of all the vices which degrade the human character, Selfishness is the most odious and contemptible. An undue love of Self leads to the most monstrous crimes; and occasions the greatest misfortunes both in *States and Families*. As a selfish man will impoverish his family and often bring them to ruin: so a selfish king brings ruin on his people and often plunges them into war.

Example: The selfishness of Achilles, as remarked by the poet Homer, occasioned a thousand woes to the Greeks — μυρί' Αχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε — (Hom. Il. A. 2). The selfishness of the late Napoleon Bonaparte occasioned innumerable wars in Europe, and caused him to perish, himself, in a miserable island — that of Saint Helena in the Atlantic Ocean.

We see by these examples that we are not to consult our own interest and ambition, but that we are to consider the interests of others as well as our own.

George S. Osborne.

Athene House, 24 April, 1827.

"Think of him writing such a hand, and quoting Greek too, at his age," the delighted mother said. "O William," she added, holding out her hand to the Major — "what a treasure Heaven has given me in that boy! He is the comfort of my life — and he is the image of — of him that 's gone!"

"Ought I to be angry with her for being faithful to him?" William thought. "Ought I to be jealous of my friend in the grave, or hurt that such a heart as Amelia's can love only once and forever? Oh, George, George, how little you knew the prize you had, though." This sentiment passed rapidly through William's mind, as he was holding Amelia's hand, whilst the handkerchief was veiling her eyes.

"Dear friend," she said, pressing the hand which held hers, "how good, how kind you always have been to me! See! Papa is stirring. You will go and see Georgy to-morrow, won't you?"

"Not to-morrow," said poor old Dobbin. "I have business." He did not like to own that he had not as yet been to his parents' and his dear sister Ann — a remissness for which I am sure every well-regulated person will blame the Major. And presently he took his leave, leaving his address behind him for Jos, against the latter's arrival. And so the first day was over, and he had seen her.

When he got back to the Slaughters' the roast fowl was of course cold, in which condition he ate it for supper. And knowing what early hours his family kept, and that it would be needless to disturb their slumbers at so late an hour, it is on record, that Major Dobbin treated himself to half-price at the Haymarket Theatre that evening, where let us hope he enjoyed himself.

CHAPTER V.

THE OLD PIANO.

THE Major's visit left old John Sedley in a great state of agitation and excitement. His daughter could not induce him to settle down to his customary occupations or amusements that night. He passed the evening fumbling amongst his boxes and desks, untying his papers with trembling hands, and sorting and arranging them against Jos's arrival. He had them in the greatest order — his tapes and his files, his receipts, and his letters with lawyers and correspondents; the documents relative to the Wine Project (which failed from a most unaccountable accident, after commencing with the most splendid prospects), the Coal Project (which only a want of capital prevented from becoming the most successful scheme ever put before the public), the Patent Saw-mills and Sawdust Consolidation Project, etc., etc. — All night, until a very late hour, he passed in the preparation of these documents, trembling about from one room to another, with a quivering candle and shaky hands. — Here 's the wine papers, here 's the sawdust, here 's the coals; here 's my letters to Calcutta and Madras, and replies from Major Dobbin, C. B., and Mr. Joseph Sedley to the same. "He shall find no irregularity about *me*, Emmy," the old gentleman said.

Emmy smiled. "I don't think Jos will care about seeing those papers, Papa," she said.

"You don't know anything about business, my dear," answered the sire, shaking his head with an important air. And it must be confessed, that on this point Emmy was very ignorant; and that is a pity, some people are so knowing. All these twopenny documents arranged on a side table, old Sedley covered them carefully over with a clean bandanna handkerchief (one out of Major Dobbin's lot), and enjoined the maid and landlady of the house, in the most solemn way, not to disturb those papers, which were arranged for the arrival of Mr. Joseph Sedley the next morning, "Mr. Joseph Sedley of the Honorable East India Company's Bengal Civil Service."

Amelia found him up very early the next morning, more eager, more hectic, and more shaky than ever. "I did n't sleep much, Emmy my dear," he said. "I was thinking of my poor Bessy. I wish she was alive, to ride in Jos's carriage once again. She kept her own, and became it very well." And his eyes filled with tears, which trickled down his furrowed old face. Amelia wiped them away, and smilingly kissed him, and tied the old man's neckcloth in a smart bow, and put his brooch into his best shirt-frill, in which, in his Sunday suit of mourning, he sat from six o'clock in the morning awaiting the arrival of his son.

There are some splendid tailors' shops in the High Street of Southampton, in the fine plate-glass windows of which hang gorgeous waistcoats of all sorts, of silk and velvet, and gold and crimson, and pictures of the last new fashions in which those wonderful gentlemen with quizzing glasses, and holding on to little boys with the exceeding large eyes and curly hair, ogle ladies in riding-habits prancing by the Statue of Achilles at Apsley House. Jos, although provided with some of the most splendid vests that Calcutta

could furnish, thought he could not go to town until he was supplied with one or two of these garments, and selected a crimson satin, embroidered with gold butterflies, and a black and red velvet tartan with white stripes and a rolling collar, with which, and a rich blue satin stock and a gold pin, consisting of a five-barred gate with a horseman in pink enamel jumping over it, he thought he might make his entry into London with some dignity. For Jos's former shyness and blundering blushing timidity had given way to a more candid and courageous self-assertion of his worth. "I don't care about owning it," Waterloo Sedley would say to his friends, "I am a dressy man:" and though rather uneasy if the ladies looked at him at the Government House balls, and though he blushed and turned away alarmed under their glances, it was chiefly from a dread lest they should make love to him, that he avoided them, being averse to marriage altogether. But there was no such swell in Calcutta as Waterloo Sedley, I have heard say: and he had the handsomest turnout, gave the best bachelor dinners, and had the finest plate in the whole place.

To make these waistcoats for a man of his size and dignity took at least a day, part of which he employed in hiring a servant to wait upon him and his native; and in instructing the agent who cleared his baggage, his boxes, his books, which he never read; his chests of mangoes, chutney, and currie-powders; his shawls for presents to people whom he didn't know as yet; and the rest of his *Persicos apparatus*.

At length, he drove leisurely to London on the third day, and in the new waistcoat: the native, with chattering teeth, shuddering in a shawl on the box by the side of the new European servant; Jos puffing his

pipe at intervals within, and looking so majestic, that the little boys cried Hooray, and many people thought he must be a Governor-General. *He*, I promise, did not decline the obsequious invitation of the landlords to alight and refresh himself in the neat country towns. Having partaken of a copious breakfast, with fish, and rice, and hard eggs, at Southampton, he had so far rallied at Winchester as to think a glass of sherry necessary. At Alton he stepped out of the carriage, at his servant's request, and imbibed some of the ale for which the place is famous. At Farnham he stopped to view the Bishop's Castle, and to partake of a light dinner of stewed eels, veal cutlets, and French beans, with a bottle of claret. He was cold over Bagshot Heath, where the native chattered more and more, and Jos Sahib took some brandy-and-water; in fact, when he drove into town, he was as full of wine, beer, meat, pickles, cherry-brandy, and tobacco, as the steward's cabin of a steam-packet. It was evening when his carriage thundered up to the little door in Brompton, whither the affectionate fellow drove first, and before hieing to the apartments secured for him by Mr. Dobbin at the Slaughters'.

All the faces in the street were in the windows; the little maid-servant flew to the wicket-gate, the Mesdames Clapp looked out from the casement of the ornamented kitchen; Emmy, in a great flutter, was in the passage among the hats and coats, and old Sedley in the parlor inside, shaking all over. Jos descended from the post-chaise and down the creaking swaying steps in awful state, supported by the new valet from Southampton and the shuddering native, whose brown face was now livid with cold, and of the color of a turkey's gizzard. He created an immense sensation in the passage presently, where Mrs. and Miss Clapp,

coming perhaps to listen at the parlor door, found Loll Jewab shaking upon the hall-bench under the coats, moaning in a strange piteous way, and showing his yellow eyeballs and white teeth.

For, you see, we have adroitly shut the door upon the meeting between Jos and the old father, and the poor little gentle sister inside. The old man was very much affected: so, of course, was his daughter: nor was Jos without feeling. In that long absence of ten years, the most selfish will think about home and early ties. Distance sanctifies both. Long brooding over those lost pleasures exaggerates their charm and sweetness. Jos was unaffectedly glad to see and shake the hand of his father, between whom and himself there had been a coolness — glad to see his little sister, whom he remembered so pretty and smiling, and pained at the alteration which time, grief, and misfortune had made in the shattered old man. Emmy had come out to the door in her black clothes and whispered to him of her mother's death, and not to speak of it to their father. There was no need of this caution, for the elder Sedley himself began immediately to speak of the event, and prattled about it, and wept over it plenteously. It shocked the Indian not a little, and made him think of himself less than the poor fellow was accustomed to do.

The result of the interview must have been very satisfactory, for when Jos had reascended his post-chaise, and had driven away to his hotel, Emmy embraced her father tenderly, appealing to him with an air of triumph, and asking the old man whether she did not always say that her brother had a good heart?

Indeed, Joseph Sedley, affected by the humble position in which he found his relations, and in the

expansiveness and overflowing of heart occasioned by the first meeting, declared that they should never suffer want or discomfort any more, that he was at home for some time at any rate, during which his house and everything he had should be theirs: and that Amelia would look very pretty at the head of his table — until she would accept one of her own.

She shook her head sadly, and had, as usual, recourse to the water-works She knew what he meant. She and her young confidante, Miss Mary, had talked over the matter most fully, the very night of the Major's visit: beyond which time the impetuous Polly could not refrain from talking of the discovery which she had made, and describing the start and tremor of joy by which Major Dobbin betrayed himself when Mr. Binny passed with his bride, and the Major learned that he had no longer a rival to fear. "Did n't you see how he shook all over when you asked if he was married, and he said, 'Who told you those lies?' O Ma'am," Polly said, "he never kept his eyes off you; and I 'm sure he 's grown gray a-thinking of you."

But Amelia, looking up at her bed, over which hung the portraits of her husband and son, told her young *protégée*, never, never, to speak on that subject again; that Major Dobbin had been her husband's dearest friend, and her own and George's most kind and affectionate guardian; that she loved him as a brother — but that a woman who had been married to such an angel as that, and she pointed to the wall, could never think of any other union. Poor Polly sighed: she thought what she should do if young Mr. Tomkins, at the surgery, who always looked at her so at church, and who, by those mere aggressive glances

had put her timorous little heart into such a flutter that she was ready to surrender at once, — what she should do if he were to die? She knew he was consumptive, his cheeks were so red, and he was so uncommon thin in the waist.

Not that Emmy, being made aware of the honest Major's passion, rebuffed him in any way, or felt displeased with him. Such an attachment from so true and loyal a gentleman could make no woman angry. Desdemona was not angry with Cassio, though there is very little doubt she saw the Lieutenant's partiality for her (and I for my part believe that many more things took place in that sad affair than the worthy Moorish officer ever knew of); why, Miranda was even very kind to Caliban, and we may be pretty sure for the same reason. Not that she would encourage him in the least, — the poor uncouth monster — of course not. No more would Emmy by any means encourage her admirer, the Major. She would give him that friendly regard, which so much excellence and fidelity merited; she would treat him with perfect cordiality and frankness until he made his proposals; and *then* it would be time enough for her to speak, and to put an end to hopes which never could be realized.

She slept, therefore, very soundly that evening, after the conversation with Miss Polly, and was more than ordinarily happy, in spite of Jos's delaying. "I am glad he is not going to marry that Miss O'Dowd," she thought. "Colonel O'Dowd never could have a sister fit for such an accomplished man as Major William." Who was there amongst her little circle, who would make him a good wife? Not Miss Binny, she was too old and ill-tempered; Miss Osborne? — too old too. Little Polly was too young. Mrs. Os-

borne could not find anybody to suit the Major before she went to sleep.

However, when the postman made his appearance, the little party were put out of suspense by the receipt of a letter from Jos to his sister, who announced, that he felt a little fatigued after his voyage, and should not be able to move on that day, but that he would leave Southampton early the next morning, and be with his father and mother at evening. Amelia, as she read out the letter to her father, paused over the latter word; her brother, it was clear, did not know what had happened in the family. Nor could he; for the fact is that though the Major rightly suspected that his travelling companion never would be got into motion in so short a space as twenty-four hours, and would find some excuse for delaying, yet Dobbin had not written to Jos to inform him of the calamity which had befallen the Sedley family; being occupied in talking with Amelia until long after post-hour.

The same morning brought Major Dobbin a letter to the Slaughters' Coffee-house from his friend at Southampton; begging dear Dob to excuse Jos for being in a rage when awakened the day before (he had a confounded headache, and was just in his first sleep), and entreating Dob to engage comfortable rooms at the Slaughters' for Mr. Sedley and his servants. The Major had become necessary to Jos during the voyage. He was attached to him, and hung upon him. The other passengers were away to London. Young Ricketts and little Chaffers went away on the coach that day — Ricketts on the box, and taking the reins from Botley; the Doctor was off to his family at Portsea; Bragg gone to town to his co-partners: and the first mate busy in the unloading of the "Ramchunder." Mr. Jos was

very lonely at Southampton, and got the landlord of the George to take a glass of wine with him that day; at the very hour at which Major Dobbin was seated at the table of his father, Sir William, where his sister found out (for it was impossible for the Major to tell fibs) that he had been to see Mrs. George Osborne.

Jos was so comfortably situated in St. Martin's Lane, he could enjoy his hookah there with such perfect ease, and could swagger down to the theatres, when minded, so agreeably, that, perhaps, he would have remained altogether at the Slaughters' had not his friend, the Major, been at his elbow. That gentleman would not let the Bengalee rest until he had executed his promise of having a home for Amelia and his father. Jos was a soft fellow in anybody's hands; Dobbin most active in anybody's concerns but his own; the civilian was, therefore, an easy victim to the guileless arts of this good-natured diplomatist, and was ready to do, to purchase, hire, or relinquish whatever his friend thought fit. Loll Jewab, of whom the boys about St. Martin's Lane used to make cruel fun whenever he showed his dusky countenance in the street, was sent back to Calcutta in the "Lady Kicklebury" East Indiaman, in which Sir William Dobbin had a share; having previously taught Jos's European the art of preparing curries, pilaus, and pipes. It was a matter of great delight and occupation to Jos to superintend the building of a smart chariot, which he and the Major ordered in the neighboring Long Acre: and a pair of handsome horses were jobbed, with which Jos drove about in state in the Park, or to call upon his Indian friends. Amelia was not seldom by his side on these excursions, when also Major Dobbin

would be seen in the back seat of the carriage. At other times old Sedley and his daughter took advantage of it: and Miss Clapp, who frequently accompanied her friend, had great pleasure in being recognized as she sat in the carriage, dressed in the famous yellow shawl, by the young gentleman at the surgery, whose face might commonly be seen over the window-blinds as she passed.

Shortly after Jos's first appearance at Brompton, a dismal scene, indeed, took place at that humble cottage, at which the Sedleys had passed the last ten years of their life. Jos's carriage (the temporary one, not the chariot under construction) arrived one day and carried off old Sedley and his daughter — to return no more. The tears that were shed by the landlady and the landlady's daughter at that event were as genuine tears of sorrow as any that have been outpoured in the course of this history. In their long acquaintanceship and intimacy they could not recall a harsh word that had been uttered by Amelia. She had been all sweetness and kindness, always thankful, always gentle, even when Mrs. Clapp lost her own temper, and pressed for the rent. When the kind creature was going away for good and all, the landlady reproached herself bitterly for ever having used a rough expression to her — how she wept, as they stuck up with wafers on the window, a paper notifying that the little rooms so long occupied were to let! They never would have such lodgers again, that was quite clear. After-life proved the truth of this melancholy prophecy: and Mrs. Clapp revenged herself for the deterioration of mankind by levying the most savage contributions upon the tea-caddies and legs of mutton of her *locataires*. Most of them scolded and grumbled; some of them did not pay: none of them

stayed. The landlady might well regret those old, old friends, who had left her.

As for Miss Mary, her sorrow at Amelia's departure was such as I shall not attempt to depict. From childhood upwards she had been with her daily, and had attached herself so passionately to that dear good lady, that when the grand barouche came to carry her off into splendor, she fainted in the arms of her friend, who was indeed scarcely less affected than the good-natured girl. Amelia loved her like a daughter. During eleven years the girl had been her constant friend and associate. The separation was a very painful one indeed to her. But it was of course arranged that Mary was to come and stay often at the grand new house whither Mrs. Osborne was going; and where Mary was sure she would never be so happy as she had been in their humble cot, as Miss Clapp called it, in the language of the novels which she loved.

Let us hope she was wrong in her judgment. Poor Emmy's days of happiness had been very few in that humble cot. A gloomy Fate had oppressed her there. She never liked to come back to the house after she had left it, or to face the landlady who had tyrannized over her when ill-humored and unpaid, or when pleased had treated her with a coarse familiarity scarcely less odious. Her servility and fulsome compliments when Emmy was in prosperity were not more to that lady's liking. She cast about notes of admiration all over the new house, extolling every article of furniture or ornament; she fingered Mrs. Osborne's dresses, and calculated their price. Nothing could be too good for that sweet lady, she vowed and protested. But in the vulgar sycophant who now paid court to her, Emmy always remem-

bered the coarse tyrant who had made her miserable many a time, to whom she had been forced to put up petitions for time, when the rent was overdue; who cried out at her extravagance if she bought delicacies for her ailing mother or father; who had seen her humble and trampled upon her.

Nobody ever heard of these griefs, which had been part of our poor little woman's lot in life. She kept them secret from her father, whose improvidence was the cause of much of her misery. She had to bear all the blame of his misdoings, and indeed was so utterly gentle and humble as to be made by nature for a victim.

I hope she is not to suffer much more of that hard usage. And, as in all griefs there is said to be some consolation, I may mention that poor Mary, when left at her friend's departure in a hysterical condition, was placed under the medical treatment of the young fellow from the surgery, under whose care she rallied after a short period. Emmy, when she went away from Brompton, endowed Mary with every article of furniture that the house contained: only taking away her pictures (the two pictures over the bed) and her piano — that little old piano which had now passed into a plaintive jingling old age, but which she loved for reasons of her own. She was a child when first she played on it: and her parents gave it her. It had been given to her again since, as the reader may remember, when her father's house was gone to ruin, and the instrument was recovered out of the wreck.

Major Dobbin was exceedingly pleased when, as he was superintending the arrangements of Jos's new house, which the Major insisted should be very handsome and comfortable, the cart arrived from

Brompton, bringing the trunks and band-boxes of the emigrants from that village, and with them the old piano. Amelia would have it up in her sitting-room, a neat little apartment on the second floor, adjoining her father's chamber: and where the old gentleman sat commonly of evenings.

When the men appeared, then, bearing this old music-box, and Amelia gave orders that it should be placed in the chamber aforesaid, Dobbin was quite elated. "I 'm glad you 've kept it," he said in a very sentimental manner. "I was afraid you did n't care about it."

"I value it more than anything I have in the world," said Amelia.

"*Do* you, Amelia?" cried the Major. The fact was, as he had bought it himself, though he never said anything about it, it never entered into his head to suppose that Emmy should think anybody else was the purchaser, and as a matter of course he fancied that she knew the gift came from him. "Do you, Amelia?" he said; and the question, the great question of all, was trembling on his lips, when Emmy replied —

"Can I do otherwise? — did not *he* give it me?"

"I did not know," said poor old Dob, and his countenance fell.

Emmy did not note the circumstance at the time, nor take immediate heed of the very dismal expression which honest Dobbin's countenance assumed; but she thought of it afterwards. And then it struck her, with inexpressible pain and mortification too, that it was William who was the giver of the piano; and not George, as she had fancied. It was not George's gift; the only one which she had received from her lover, as she thought — the thing she had

cherished beyond all others — her dearest relic and prize. She had spoken to it about George; played his favorite airs upon it: sat for long evening hours, touching, to the best of her simple art, melancholy harmonies on the keys, and weeping over them in silence. It was not George's relic. It was valueless now. The next time that old Sedley asked her to play, she said it was shockingly out of tune, that she had a headache, that she could n't play.

Then, according to her custom, she rebuked herself for her pettishness and ingratitude, and determined to make a reparation to honest William for the slight she had not expressed to him, but had felt for his piano. A few days afterwards, as they were seated in the drawing-room, where Jos had fallen asleep with great comfort after dinner, Amelia said with rather a faltering voice to Major Dobbin, —

"I have to beg your pardon for something."

"About what?" said he.

"About — about that little square piano. I never thanked you for it when you gave it me; many, many years ago, before I was married. I thought somebody else had given it. Thank you, William." She held out her hand; but the poor little woman's heart was bleeding; and as for her eyes, of course they were at their work.

But William could hold no more. "Amelia, Amelia," he said, "I did buy it for you. I loved you then as I do now. I must tell you. I think I loved you from the first minute that I saw you, when George brought me to your house, to show me the Amelia whom he was engaged to. You were but a girl, in white, with large ringlets; you came down singing — do you remember? — and we went to Vauxhall. Since then I have thought of but one woman in the

world, and that was you. I think there is no hour in the day has passed for twelve years that I have n't thought of you. I came to tell you this before I went to India, but you did not care, and I had n't the heart to speak. You did not care whether I stayed or went."

"I was very ungrateful," Amelia said.

"No; only indifferent," Dobbin continued desperately. "I have nothing to make a woman to be otherwise. I know what you are feeling now. You are hurt in your heart at the discovery about the piano; and that it came from me and not from George. I forgot, or I should never have spoken of it so. It is for me to ask your pardon for being a fool for a moment, and thinking that years of constancy and devotion might have pleaded with you."

"It is you who are cruel now," Amelia said with some spirit. "George is my husband, here and in heaven. How could I love any other but him? I am his now as when you first saw me, dear William. It was he who told me how good and generous you were, and who taught me to love you as a brother. Have you not been everything to me and my boy? Our dearest, truest, kindest friend and protector? Had you come a few months sooner perhaps you might have spared me that — that dreadful parting. Oh, it nearly killed me, William — but you did n't come, though I wished and prayed for you to come, and they took him too away from me. Is n't he a noble boy, William? Be his friend still and mine" — and here her voice broke, and she hid her face on his shoulder.

The Major folded his arms round her, holding her to him as if she was a child, and kissed her head. "I will not change, dear Amelia," he said. "I ask for

no more than your love. I think I would not have it otherwise. Only let me stay near you, and see you often."

"Yes, often," Amelia said. And so William was at liberty to look and long: as the poor boy at school who has no money may sigh after the contents of the tart-woman's tray.

CHAPTER VI.

RETURNS TO THE GENTEEL WORLD.

Good fortune now begins to smile upon Amelia. We are glad to get her out of that low sphere in which she has been creeping hitherto, and introduce her into a polite circle; not so grand and refined as that in which our other female friend, Mrs. Becky, has appeared, but still having no small pretensions to gentility and fashion. Jos's friends were all from the three presidencies, and his new house was in the comfortable Anglo-Indian district of which Moira Place is the centre. Minto Square, Great Clive Street, Warren Street, Hastings Street, Ochterlony Place, Plassy Square, Assaye Terrace ("Gardens" was a felicitous word not applied to stucco houses with asphalte terraces in front, so early as 1827) — who does not know these respectable abodes of the retired Indian aristocracy, and the quarter which Mr. Wenham calls the Black Hole, in a word? Jos's position in life was not grand enough to entitle him to a house in Moira Place, where none can live but retired Members of Council, and partners of Indian firms (who break after having settled a hundred thousand pounds on their wives, and retire into comparative penury to a country place and four thousand a-year): he engaged a comfortable house of a second or third-rate order in Gillespie Street, purchasing the carpets, costly mirrors, and handsome and appropriate planned furniture by Seddons, from the assignees of Mr.

Scape, lately admitted partner into the great Calcutta House of Fogle, Fake, and Cracksman, in which poor Scape had embarked seventy thousand pounds, the earnings of a long and honorable life, taking Fake's place, who retired to a princely Park in Sussex (the Fogles have been long out of the firm, and Sir Horace Fogle is about to be raised to the peerage as Baron Bandanna) — admitted, I say, partner into the great agency house of Fogle and Fake two years before it failed for a million, and plunged half the Indian public into misery and ruin.

Scape, ruined, honest, and broken-hearted at sixty-five years of age, went out to Calcutta to wind up the affairs of the house. Walter Scape was withdrawn from Eton, and put into a merchant's house. Florence Scape, Fanny Scape, and their mother faded away to Boulogne, and will be heard of no more. To be brief, Jos stepped in and bought their carpets and sideboards, and admired himself in the mirrors which had reflected their kind handsome faces. The Scape tradesmen, all honorably paid, left their cards, and were eager to supply the new household. The large men in white waistcoats, who waited at Scape's dinners, green-grocers, bank-porters, and milk-men in their private capacity, left their addresses, and ingratiated themselves with the butler. Mr. Chummy, the chimney-purifier, who had swept the last three families, tried to coax the butler and the boy under him, whose duty it was to go out covered with buttons and with stripes down his trousers, for the protection of Mrs. Amelia whenever she chose to walk abroad.

It was a modest establishment. The butler was Jos's valet also, and never was more drunk than a butler in a small family should be who has a proper

regard for his master's wine. Emmy was supplied with a maid, grown on Sir William Dobbin's suburban estate; a good girl, whose kindness and humility disarmed Mrs. Osborne, who was at first terrified at the idea of having a servant to wait upon herself, who did not in the least know how to use one, and who always spoke to domestics with the most reverential politeness. But this maid was very useful in the family, in dexterously tending old Mr. Sedley, who kept almost entirely to his own quarter of the house, and never mixed in any of the gay doings which took place there.

Numbers of people came to see Mrs. Osborne. Lady Dobbin and daughters were delighted at her change of fortune, and waited upon her. Miss Osborne from Russell Square came in her grand chariot with the flaming hammercloth emblazoned with the Leeds arms. Jos was reported to be immensely rich. Old Osborne had no objection that Georgy should inherit his uncle's property as well as his own. "Damn it, we will make a man of the feller," he said; "and I'll see him in Parliament before I die. *You* may go and see his mother, Miss O., though I'll never set eyes on her:" and Miss Osborne came. Emmy, you may be sure, was very glad to see her, and so be brought nearer to George. That young fellow was allowed to come much more frequently than before to visit his mother. He dined once or twice a week in Gillespie Street, and bullied the servants and his relations there, just as he did in Russell Square.

He was always respectful to Major Dobbin, however, and more modest in his demeanor when that gentleman was present. He was a clever lad, and afraid of the Major. George could not help admir-

ing his friend's simplicity, his good-humor, his various learning quietly imparted, his general love of truth and justice. He had met no such man as yet in the course of his experience, and he had an instinctive liking for a gentleman. He hung fondly by his god-father's side; and it was his delight to walk in the Parks and hear Dobbin talk. William told George about his father, about India and Waterloo, about everything but himself. When George was more than usully pert and conceited, the Major made jokes at him, which Mrs. Osborne thought very cruel. One day, taking him to the play, and the boy declining to go into the pit because it was vulgar, the Major took him to the boxes, left him there, and went down himself to the pit. He had not been seated there very long, before he felt an arm thrust under his, and a dandy little hand in a kid-glove squeezing his arm. George had seen the absurdity of his ways, and come down from the upper region. A tender laugh of benevolence lighted up old Dobbin's face and eyes as he looked at the repentant little prodigal. He loved the boy, as he did everything that belonged to Amelia. How charmed she was when she heard of this instance of George's goodness! Her eyes looked more kindly on Dobbin than they ever had done. She blushed, he thought, after looking at him so.

Georgy never tired of his praises of the Major to his mother. "I like him, Mamma, because he knows such lots of things; and he ain't like old Veal, who is always bragging and using such long words, don't you know? The chaps call him 'Longtail' at school. I gave him the name; ain't it capital? But Dob reads Latin like English, and French and that; and when we go out together he tells me stories about

my Papa, and never about himself; though I heard Colonel Buckler, at Grandpapa's, say that he was one of the bravest officers in the army, and had distinguished himself ever so much. Grandpapa was quite surprised, and said, '*That* feller! why, I did n't think he could say Bo to a goose' — but *I* know he could, could n't he, Mamma?"

Emmy laughed: she thought it was very likely the Major could do thus much.

If there was a sincere liking between George and the Major, it must be confessed that between the boy and his uncle no great love existed. George had got a way of blowing out his cheeks, and putting his hands in his waistcoat pockets, and saying, "God bless my soul, you don't say so," so exactly after the fashion of old Jos, that it was impossible to refrain from laughter. The servants would explode at dinner if the lad, asking for something, which was n't at table, put on that countenance and used that favorite phrase. Even Dobbin would shoot out a sudden peal at the boy's mimicry. If George did not mimic his uncle to his face, it was only by Dobbin's rebukes and Amelia's terrified entreaties that the little scapegrace was induced to resist. And the worthy civilian being haunted by a dim consciousness that the lad thought him an ass, and was inclined to turn him into ridicule, used to be extremely timorous and, of course, doubly pompous and dignified in the presence of Master Georgy. When it was announced that the young gentleman was expected in Gillespie Street to dine with his mother, Mr. Jos commonly found that he had an engagement at the club. Perhaps nobody was much grieved at his absence. On those days Mr. Sedley would commonly be induced to come out from his place of refuge in the upper stories; and there

would be a small family party, whereof Major Dobbin pretty generally formed one. He was the *ami de la maison;* old Sedley's friend, Emmy's friend, Georgy's friend, Jos's counsel and adviser. "He might almost as well be at Madras for anything *we* see of him," Miss Ann Dobbin remarked, at Camberwell. Ah! Miss Ann, did it not strike you that it was not *you* whom the Major wanted to marry?

Joseph Sedley then led a life of dignified otiosity such as became a person of his eminence. His very first point, of course, was to become a member of the Oriental Club: where he spent his mornings in the company of his brother Indians, where he dined, or whence he brought home men to dine.

Amelia had to receive and entertain these gentlemen and their ladies. From these she heard how soon Smith would be in Council; how many lacs Jones had brought home with him, how Thomson's House in London had refused the bills drawn by Thomson, Kibobjee, and Co., the Bombay House, and how it was thought the Calcutta House must go too: how very imprudent, to say the least of it, Mrs. Brown's conduct (wife of Brown of the Ahmednuggur Irregulars) had been with young Swankey of the Body Guard, sitting up with him on deck until all hours, and losing themselves as they were riding out at the Cape; how Mrs. Hardyman had had out her thirteen sisters, daughters of a country curate, the Rev. Felix Rabbits, and married eleven of them, seven high up in the service; how Hornby was wild because his wife would stay in Europe, and Trotter was appointed Collector at Ummerapoora. This and similar talk took place, at the grand dinners all round. They had the same conversation; the same silver dishes; the same saddles of mutton, boiled tur-

keys, and *entrées*. Politics set in a short time after dessert, when the ladies retired up stairs and talked about their complaints and their children.

Mutato nomine, it is all the same. Don't the barristers' wives talk about Circuit? — Don't the soldiers' ladies gossip about the Regiment? — don't the clergymen's ladies discourse about Sunday-schools, and who takes whose duty? — don't the very greatest ladies of all talk about that small clique of persons to whom they belong, and why should our Indian friends not have their own conversation? — only I admit it is slow for the laymen whose fate it sometimes is to sit by and listen.

Before long Emmy had a visiting-book, and was driving about regularly in a carriage, calling upon Lady Bludyer (wife of Major-General Sir Roger Bludyer, K.C.B., Bengal Army); Lady Huff, wife of Sir G. Huff, Bombay ditto; Mrs. Pice, the Lady of Pice the Director, etc. We are not long in using ourselves to changes in life. That carriage came round to Gillespie Street every day: that buttony boy sprang up and down from the box with Emmy's and Jos's visiting-cards; at stated hours Emmy and the carriage went for Jos to the club, and took him an airing; or, putting old Sedley into the vehicle, she drove the old man round the Regent's Park. The lady's-maid and the chariot, the visiting-book and the buttony page, became soon as familiar to Amelia as the humble routine of Brompton. She accommodated herself to one as to the other. If Fate had ordained that she should be a duchess, she would even have done that duty too. She was voted, in Jos's female society, rather a pleasing young person — not much in her, but pleasing, and that sort of thing.

The men, as usual, liked her artless kindness and

simple refined demeanor. The gallant young Indian dandies at home on furlough — immense dandies these — chained and mustached — driving in tearing cabs, the pillars of the theatres, living at West End hotels, — nevertheless admired Mrs. Osborne, liked to bow to her carriage in the Park, and to be admitted to have the honor of paying her a morning visit. Swankey of the Body Guard himself, that dangerous youth, and the greatest buck of all the Indian army now on leave, was one day discovered by Major Dobbin *tête-à-tête* with Amelia, and describing the sport of pig-sticking to her with great humor and eloquence: and he spoke afterwards of a d—d King's officer that 's always hanging about the house — a long, thin, queer-looking oldish fellow — a dry fellow though, that took the shine out of a man in the talking line.

Had the Major possessed a little more personal vanity he would have been jealous of so dangerous a young buck as that fascinating Bengal Captain. But Dobbin was of too simple and generous a nature to have any doubts about Amelia. He was glad that the young men should pay her respect; and that others should admire her. Ever since her womanhood almost, had she not been persecuted and undervalued. It pleased him to see how kindness brought out her good qualities, and how her spirits gently rose with her prosperity. Any person who appreciated her paid a compliment to the Major's good judgment — that is, if a man may be said to have good judgment who is under the influence of Love's delusion.

After Jos went to court, which we may be sure he did as a loyal subject of his Sovereign (showing himself in his full court suit at the club, whither Dobbin

came to fetch him in a very shabby old uniform), he who had always been a stanch Loyalist and admirer of George IV., became such a tremendous Tory and pillar of the State, that he was for having Amelia to go to a Drawing-room too. He somehow had worked himself up to believe that he was implicated in the maintenance of the public welfare, and that the Sovereign would not be happy unless Jos Sedley and his family appeared to rally round him at St. James's.

Emmy laughed. "Shall I wear the family diamonds, Jos?" she said.

"I wish you would let me buy you some," thought the Major. "I should like to see any that were too good for you."

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH TWO LIGHTS ARE PUT OUT.

THERE came a day when the round of decorous pleasures and solemn gayeties in which Mr. Jos Sedley's family indulged, was interrupted by an event which happens in most houses. As you ascend the staircase of your house from the drawing towards the bed-room floors, you may have remarked a little arch in the wall right before you, which at once gives light to the stair which leads from the second story to the third (where the nursery and servants' chambers commonly are) and serves for another purpose of utility of which the undertaker's men can give you a notion. They rest the coffins upon that arch, or pass them through it so as not to disturb in any unseemly manner the cold tenant slumbering within the black arch.

That second-floor arch in a London house, looking up and down the well of the staircase, and commanding the main thoroughfare by which the inhabitants are passing; by which cook lurks down before daylight to scour her pots and pans in the kitchen; by which young master stealthily ascends, having left his boots in the hall, and let himself in after dawn from a jolly night at the club; down which Miss comes rustling in fresh ribbons and spreading muslins, brilliant and beautiful, and prepared for conquest and the ball; or Master Tommy slides, preferring the banisters for a mode of conveyance, and disdaining danger and the

stair; down which the mother is fondly carried smiling in her strong husband's arms, as he steps steadily step by step, and followed by the monthly nurse, on the day when the medical man has pronounced that the charming patient may go down stairs; up which John lurks to bed, yawning with a sputtering tallow candle, and to gather up before sunrise the boots which are awaiting him in the passages; — that stair, up or down which babies are carried, old people are helped, guests are marshalled to the ball, the parson walks to the christening, the doctor to the sick-room, and the undertaker's men to the upper floor — what a memento of Life, Death, and Vanity it is — that arch and stair — if you choose to consider it, and sit on the landing, looking up and down the well! The doctor will come up to us too for the last time there, my friend in motley. The nurse will look in at the curtains, and you take no notice — and then she will fling open the windows for a little, and let in the air. Then they will pull down all the front blinds of the house and live in the back rooms — then they will send for the lawyer and other men in black, etc. — Your comedy and mine will have been played then, and we shall be removed, oh how far, from the trumpets, and the shouting, and the posture-making. If we are gentlefolks they will put hatchments over our late domicile, with gilt cherubim, and mottoes stating that there is "Quiet in Heaven." Your son will new furnish the house, or perhaps let it, and go into a more modern quarter; your name will be among the "Members Deceased," in the lists of your clubs next year. However much you may be mourned, your widow will like to have her weeds neatly made — the cook will send or come up to ask about dinner — the survivor will soon bear to look at your picture over the mantel-

piece, which will presently be deposed from the place of honor, to make way for the portrait of the son who reigns.

Which of the dead are most tenderly and passionately deplored? Those who love the survivors the least, I believe. The death of a child occasions a passion of grief and frantic tears, such as your end, brother reader, will never inspire. The death of an infant which scarce knew you, which a week's absence from you would have caused to forget you, will strike you down more than the loss of your closest friend, or your first-born son — a man grown like yourself, with children of his own. We may be harsh and stern with Judah and Simeon — our love and pity gush out for Benjamin, the little one. And if you are old, as some reader of this may be or shall be — old and rich, or old and poor — you may one day be thinking for yourself — "These people are very good round about me; but they won't grieve too much when I am gone. I am very rich, and they want my inheritance — or very poor, and they are tired of supporting me."

The period of mourning for Mrs. Sedley's death was only just concluded, and Jos scarcely had had time to cast off his black and appear in the splendid waistcoats which he loved, when it became evident to those about Mr. Sedley, that another event was at hand, and that the old man was about to go seek for his wife in the dark land whither she had preceded him. "The state of my father's health," Jos Sedley solemnly remarked at the club, "prevents me from giving any *large* parties this season: but if you will come in quietly at half-past six, Chutney, my boy, and take a homely dinner with one or two of the old set — I shall be always glad to see you." So Jos and his acquain-

tances dined and drank their claret among themselves in silence; whilst the sands of life were running out in the old man's glass up stairs. The velvet-footed butler brought them their wine; and they composed themselves to a rubber after dinner: at which Major Dobbin would sometimes come and take a hand: and Mrs. Osborne would occasionally descend, when her patient above was settled for the night, and had commenced one of those lightly troubled slumbers which visit the pillow of old age.

The old man clung to his daughter during this sickness. He would take his broths and medicines from scarcely any other hand. To tend him became almost the sole business of her life. Her bed was placed close by the door which opened into his chamber, and she was alive at the slightest noise or disturbance from the couch of the querulous invalid. Though, to do him justice, he lay awake many an hour, silent and without stirring, unwilling to awaken his kind and vigilant nurse.

He loved his daughter with more fondness now, perhaps, than ever he had done since the days of her childhood. In the discharge of gentle offices and kind filial duties, this simple creature shone most especially. "She walks into the room as silently as a sunbeam," Mr. Dobbin thought, as he saw her passing in and out from her father's room; a cheerful sweetness lighting up her face as she moved to and fro, graceful and noiseless. When women are brooding over their children, or busied in a sick-room, who has not seen in their faces those sweet angelic beams of love and pity?

A secret feud of some years' standing was thus healed: and with a tacit reconciliation. In these last hours, and touched by her love and goodness, the

old man forgot all his grief against her, and wrongs which he and his wife had many a long night debated: how she had given up everything for her boy: how she was careless of her parents in their old age and misfortune, and only thought of the child: how absurdly and foolishly, impiously indeed, she took on, when George was removed from her. Old Sedley forgot these charges as he was making up his last account, and did justice to the gentle and uncomplaining little martyr. One night when she stole into his room, she found him awake, when the broken old man made his confession. "Oh, Emmy, I've been thinking we were very unkind and unjust to you," he said, and put out his cold and feeble hand to her. She knelt down and prayed by his bedside, as he did too, having still hold of her hand. When our turn comes, friend, may we have such company in our prayers.

Perhaps as he was lying awake then, his life may have passed before him — his early hopeful struggles, his manly successes and prosperity, his downfall in his declining years, and his present helpless condition — no chance of revenge against Fortune, which had had the better of him — neither name nor money to bequeath — a spent-out, bootless life of defeat and disappointment, and the end here! Which, I wonder, brother reader, is the better lot, to die prosperous and famous, or poor and disappointed? To have, and to be forced to yield; or to sink out of life, having played and lost the game? That must be a strange feeling, when a day of our life comes and we say, "*To-morrow*, success or failure won't matter much: and the sun will rise, and all the myriads of mankind go to their work or their pleasure as usual, but I shall be out of the turmoil."

So there came one morning and sunrise, when all

the world got up and set about its various works and pleasures, with the exception of old John Sedley, who was not to fight with fortune, or to hope or scheme any more: but to go and take up a quiet and utterly unknown residence in a churchyard at Brompton by the side of his old wife.

Major Dobbin, Jos, and Georgy followed his remains to the grave, in a black cloth coach. Jos came on purpose from the Star and Garter at Richmond, whither he retreated after the deplorable event. He did not care to remain in the house, with the — under the circumstances, you understand. But Emmy stayed and did her duty as usual. She was bowed down by no especial grief, and rather solemn than sorrowful. She prayed that her own end might be as calm and painless, and thought with trust and reverence of the words which she had heard from her father during his illness, indicative of his faith, his resignation, and his future hope.

Yes, I think that will be the better ending of the two, after all. Suppose you are particularly rich and well-to-do, and say on that last day, "I am very rich; I am tolerably well known; I have lived all my life in the best society, and thank Heaven, come of a most respectable family. I have served my King and country with honor. I was in Parliament for several years, where, I may say, my speeches were listened to, and pretty well received. I don't owe any man a shilling: on the contrary, I lent my old college friend, Jack Lazarus, fifty pounds, for which my executors will not press him. I leave my daughters with ten thousand pounds apiece — very good portions for girls: I bequeath my plate and furniture, my house in Baker Street, with a handsome jointure, to my widow for her life; and my landed property, besides money in

the funds, and my cellar of well-selected wine in Baker Street, to my son. I leave twenty pound a-year to my valet; and I defy any man after I am gone to find anything against my character." Or suppose, on the other hand, your swan sings quite a different sort of dirge, and you say, "I am a poor blighted, disappointed old fellow, and have made an utter failure through life. I was not endowed either with brains or with good fortune: and confess that I have committed a hundred mistakes and blunders. I own to having forgotten my duty many a time. I can't pay what I owe. On my last bed I lie utterly helpless and humble: and I pray forgiveness for my weakness, and throw myself with a contrite heart, at the feet of the Divine Mercy." Which of these two speeches, think you, would be the best oration for your own funeral? Old Sedley made the last; and in that humble frame of mind, and holding by the hand of his daughter, life and disappointment and vanity sank away from under him.

"You see," said old Osborne to George, "what comes of merit and industry, and judicious speculations, and that. Look at me and my banker's account. Look at your poor grandfather, Sedley, and his failure. And yet he was a better man than I was, this day twenty years — a better man, I should say, by ten thousand pound."

Beyond these people and Mr. Clapp's family, who came over from Brompton to pay a visit of condolence, not a single soul alive ever cared a penny piece about old John Sedley, or remembered the existence of such a person.

When old Osborne first heard from his friend Colonel Buckler (as little Georgy has already informed

us) how distinguished an officer Major Dobbin was, he exhibited a great deal of scornful incredulity, and expressed his surprise how ever such a feller as that should possess either brains or reputation. But he heard of the Major's fame from various members of his society. Sir William Dobbin had a great opinion of his son, and narrated many stories illustrative of the Major's learning, valor, and estimation in the world's opinion. Finally, his name appeared in the lists of one or two great parties of the nobility; and this circumstance had a prodigious effect upon the old aristocrat of Russell Square.

The Major's position as guardian to Georgy, whose possession had been ceded to his grandfather, rendered some meetings between the two gentlemen inevitable; and it was in one of these that old Osborne, a keen man of business, looking into the Major's accounts with his ward and the boy's mother, got a hint which staggered him very much, and at once pained and pleased him, that it was out of William Dobbin's own pocket that a part of the fund had been supplied upon which the poor widow and the child had subsisted.

When pressed upon the point, Dobbin, who could not tell lies, blushed and stammered a good deal, and finally confessed. "The marriage," he said (at which his interlocutor's face grew dark), "was very much my doing. I thought my poor friend had gone so far, that retreat from his engagement would have been dishonor to him, and death to Mrs. Osborne; and I could do no less, when she was left without resources, than give what money I could spare to maintain her."

"Major D.," Mr. Osborne said, looking hard at him, and turning very red too — "you did me a great injury; but give me leave to tell you, sir, you are an

honest feller. There's my hand, sir, though I little thought that my flesh and blood was living on you—" and the pair shook hands, with great confusion on Major Dobbin's part, thus found out in his act of charitable hypocrisy.

He strove to soften the old man, and reconcile him towards his son's memory. "He was such a noble fellow," he said, "that all of us loved him, and would have done anything for him. I, as a young man in those days, was flattered beyond measure by his preference for me; and was more pleased to be seen in his company than in that of the Commander-in-Chief. I never saw his equal for pluck and daring, and all the qualities of a soldier;" and Dobbin told the old father as many stories as he could remember regarding the gallantry and achievements of his son. "And Georgy is so like him," the Major added.

"He's so like him that he makes me tremble sometimes," the grandfather said.

On one or two evenings the Major came to dine with Mr. Osborne (it was during the time of the sickness of Mr. Sedley), and as the two sat together in the evening after dinner all their talk was about the departed hero. The father boasted about him according to his wont, glorifying himself in recounting his son's feats and gallantry, but his mood was at any rate better and more charitable than that in which he had been disposed until now to regard the poor fellow; and the Christian heart of the kind Major was pleased at these symptoms of returning peace and good will. On the second evening old Osborne called Dobbin, William, just as he used to do at the time when Dobbin and George were boys together: and the honest gentleman was pleased by that mark of reconciliation.

On the next day at breakfast when Miss Osborne, with the asperity of her age and character, ventured to make some remark reflecting slightingly upon the Major's appearance or behavior — the master of the house interrupted her. "You'd have been glad enough to git him for yourself, Miss O. But them grapes are sour. Ha! ha! Major William is a fine feller."

"That he is, Grandpapa," said Georgy, approvingly: and going up close to the old gentleman he took a hold of his large gray whiskers, and laughed in his face good-humoredly and kissed him. And he told the story at night to his mother: who fully agreed with the boy. "Indeed he is," she said. "Your dear father always said so. He is one of the best and most upright of men." Dobbin happened to drop in very soon after this conversation, which made Amelia blush perhaps: and the young scapegrace increased the confusion by telling Dobbin the other part of the story. "I say, Dob," he said, "there's such an uncommon nice girl wants to marry you. She's plenty of tin: she wears a front: and she scolds the servants from morning till night." "Who is it?" asked Dobbin.

"It's aunt O.," the boy answered. "Grandpapa said so. And I say, Dob, how prime it would be to have you for my uncle." Old Sedley's quavering voice from the next room at this moment weakly called for Amelia and the laughing ended.

That old Osborne's mind was changing, was pretty clear. He asked George about his uncle sometimes, and laughed at the boy's imitation of the way in which Jos said, "God bless my soul," and gobbled his soup. Then he said, "It's not respectful, sir, of you younkers to be imitating of your relations. Miss O., when you go out a-driving to-day, leave my card upon Mr.

Sedley, do you hear? There's no quarrel betwigst me and him anyhow."

The card was returned, and Jos and the Major were asked to dinner, — to a dinner the most splendid and stupid that perhaps ever Mr. Osborne gave; every inch of the family plate was exhibited, and the best company was asked. Mr. Sedley took down Miss O. to dinner, and she was very gracious to him; whereas she hardly spoke to the Major, who sat apart from her, and by the side of Mr. Osborne, very timid. Jos said, with great solemnity, it was the best turtle soup he had ever tasted in his life; and asked Mr. Osborne where he got his Madeira?

"It is some of Sedley's wine," whispered the butler to his master. "I 've had it a long time, and paid a good figure for it too," Mr. Osborne said aloud to his guest; and then whispered to his right-hand neighbor how he had got it "at the old chap's sale."

More than once he asked the Major about — about Mrs. George Osborne — a theme on which the Major could be very eloquent when he chose. He told Mr. Osborne of her sufferings — of her passionate attachment to her husband, whose memory she worshipped still — of the tender and dutiful manner in which she had supported her parents, and given up her boy, when it seemed to her her duty to do so. "You don't know what she endured, sir," said honest Dobbin with a tremor in his voice; "and I hope and trust you will be reconciled to her. If she took your son away from you, she gave hers to you; and however much you loved your George, depend on it, she loved hers ten times more."

"By God, you are a good feller, sir," was all Mr. Osborne said. It had never struck him that the widow would feel any pain at parting from the boy, or

that his having a fine fortune could grieve her. A reconciliation was announced as speedy and inevitable; and Amelia's heart already began to beat at the notion of the awful meeting with George's father.

It was never, however, destined to take place. Old Sedley's lingering illness and death supervened, after which a meeting was for some time impossible. That catastrophe and other events may have worked upon Mr. Osborne. He was much shaken of late, and aged, and his mind was working inwardly. He had sent for his lawyers, and probably changed something in his will. The medical man who looked in, pronounced him shaky; agitated, and talked of a little blood and the sea-side; but he took neither of these remedies.

One day when he should have come down to breakfast, his servant missing him, went into his dressing-room and found him lying at the foot of the dressing-table in a fit. Miss Osborne was apprised; the doctors were sent for, Georgy stopped away from school; the bleeders and cuppers came. Osborne partially regained cognizance; but never could speak again, though he tried dreadfully once or twice, and in four days he died. The doctors went down, and the undertaker's men went up the stairs; and all the shutters were shut towards the garden in Russell Square. Bullock rushed from the city in a hurry. "How much money had he left to that boy? — not half, surely? Surely share and share alike between the three?" It was an agitating moment.

What was it that poor old man tried once or twice in vain to say? I hope it was that he wanted to see Amelia, and be reconciled before he left the world to the dear and faithful wife of his son: it was most likely that; for his will showed that the hatred which he had so long cherished had gone out of his heart.

They found in the pocket of his dressing-gown the letter with the great red seal, which George had written him from Waterloo. He had looked at the other papers too, relative to his son, for the key of the box in which he kept them was also in his pocket, and it was found the seals and envelopes had been broken — very likely on the night before the seizure — when the butler had taken him tea into his study, and found him reading in the great red family Bible.

When the will was opened, it was found that half the property was left to George, and the remainder between the two sisters. Mr. Bullock to continue, for their joint benefit, the affairs of the commercial house, or to go out, as he thought fit. An annuity of five hundred pounds, chargeable on George's property, was left to his mother, "the widow of my beloved son, George Osborne," who was to resume the guardianship of the boy.

"Major William Dobbin, my beloved son's friend," was appointed executor; "and as out of his kindness and bounty, and with his own private funds, he maintained my grandson and my son's widow, when they were otherwise without means of support" (the testator went on to say), "I hereby thank him heartily for his love and regard for them: and beseech him to accept such a sum as may be sufficient to purchase his commission as a Lieutenant-Colonel, or to be disposed of in any way he may think fit."

When Amelia heard that her father-in-law was reconciled to her, her heart melted, and she was grateful for the fortune left to her. But when she heard how Georgy was restored to her, and knew how and by whom, and how it was William's bounty that supported her in poverty, how it was William who gave her her husband and her son — oh, then she sank on

her knees, and prayed for blessings on that constant and kind heart. She bowed down and humbled herself, and kissed the feet, as it were, of that beautiful and generous affection.

And gratitude was all that she had to pay back for such admirable devotion and benefits — only gratitude! If she thought of any other return, the image of George stood up out of the grave, and said, "You are mine, and mine only, now and forever."

William knew her feelings: had he not passed his whole life in divining them?

When the nature of Mr. Osborne's will became known to the world, it was edifying to remark how Mrs. George Osborne rose in the estimation of the people forming her circle of acquaintance. The servants of Jos's establishment, who used to question her humble orders, and say they would "ask Master," whether or not they could obey, never thought now of that sort of appeal. The cook forgot to sneer at her shabby old gowns (which, indeed, were quite eclipsed by that lady's finery when she was dressed to go to church of a Sunday evening), the others no longer grumbled at the sound of her bell, or delayed to answer that summons. The coachman, who grumbled that his 'osses should be brought out, and his carriage made into an hospital for that old feller and Mrs. O., drove her with the utmost alacrity now, and trembling lest he should be superseded by Mr. Osborne's coachman, asked "what them there Russell Square coachmen knew about town, and whether *they* was fit to sit on a box before a lady?" Jos's friends, male and female, suddenly became interested about Emmy, and cards of condolence multiplied on her hall table. Jos himself, who had looked on her as a good-natured harmless pauper, to whom it was his

duty to give victuals and shelter, paid her and the rich little boy, his nephew, the greatest respect — was anxious that she should have change and amusement after her troubles and trials, "poor dear girl" — and began to appear at the breakfast-table, and most particularly to ask how she would like to dispose of the day.

In her capacity of guardian to Georgy, she, with the consent of the Major, her fellow-trustee, begged Miss Osborne to live in the Russell Square house as long as ever she chose to dwell there; but that lady, with thanks, declared that she never could think of remaining alone in that melancholy mansion, and departed in deep mourning to Cheltenham, with a couple of her old domestics. The rest were liberally paid and dismissed; the faithful old butler, whom Mrs. Osborne proposed to retain, resigning and preferring to invest his savings in a public-house, where, let us hope, he was not unprosperous. Miss Osborne not choosing to live in Russell Square, Mrs. Osborne also, after consultation, declined to occupy the gloomy old mansion there. The house was dismantled; the rich furniture and effects, the awful chandeliers and dreary blank mirrors packed away and hidden, the rich rosewood drawing-room suite was muffled in straw, the carpets were rolled up and corded, the small select library of well-bound books was stowed into two wine-chests, and the whole paraphernalia rolled away in several enormous vans to the Pantechnicon, where they were to lie until Georgy's majority. And the great heavy dark plate-chests went off to Messrs. Stumpy and Rowdy, to lie in the cellars of those eminent bankers until the same period should arrive.

One day Emmy with George in her hand and clad in deep sables went to visit the deserted mansion which she had not entered since she was a girl. The

place in front was littered with straw where the vans had been laden and rolled off. They went into the great blank rooms, the walls of which bore the marks where the pictures and mirrors had hung. Then they went up the great blank stone staircases into the upper rooms, into that where grandpapa died, as George said in a whisper, and then higher still into George's own room. The boy was still clinging by her side, but she thought of another besides him. She knew that it had been his father's room as well as his own.

She went up to one of the open windows (one of those at which she used to gaze with a sick heart when the child was first taken from her), and thence as she looked out she could see, over the trees of Russell Square, the old house in which she herself was born, and where she had passed so many happy days of sacred youth. They all came back to her, the pleasant holidays, the kind faces, the careless, joyful past times: and the long pains and trials that had since cast her down. She thought of these and of the man who had been her constant protector, her good genius, her sole benefactor, her tender and generous friend.

"Look here, mother," said Georgy, "here 's a G. O. scratched on the glass with a diamond; I never saw it before, *I* never did it."

"It was your father's room long before you were born, George," she said, and she blushed as she kissed the boy.

She was very silent as they drove back to Richmond where they had taken a temporary house: where the smiling lawyers used to come bustling over to see her (and we may be sure noted the visit in the bill): and where of course there was a room for Major Dobbin too, who rode over frequently, having much business to transact on behalf of his little ward.

Georgy at this time was removed from Mr. Veal's on an unlimited holiday, and that gentleman was engaged to prepare an inscription for a fine marble slab, to be placed up in the Foundling under the monument of Captain George Osborne.

The female Bullock, aunt of Georgy, although despoiled by that little monster of one half of the sum which she expected from her father, nevertheless showed her charitableness of spirit by being reconciled to the mother and the boy. Roehampton is not far from Richmond, and one day the chariot, with the golden bullocks emblazoned on the panels, and the flaccid children within, drove to Amelia's house at Richmond; and the Bullock family made an irruption into the garden, where Amelia was reading a book, Jos was in an arbor placidly dipping strawberries into wine, and the Major in one of his Indian jackets was giving a back to Georgy, who chose to jump over him. He went over his head, and bounded into the little advance of Bullocks, with immense black bows in their hats, and huge black sashes, accompanying their mourning mamma.

"He is just of the age for Rosa," the fond parent thought, and glanced towards that dear child, an unwholesome little Miss of seven years of age.

"Rosa, go and kiss your dear cousin," Mrs. Frederick said. "Don't you know me, George? — I am your aunt."

"*I* know you well enough," George said; "but I don't like kissing, please;" and he retreated from the obedient caresses of his cousin.

"Take me to your dear mamma, you droll child," Mrs. Frederick said; and those ladies accordingly met, after an absence of more than fifteen years.

During Emmy's cares and poverty the other had never once thought about coming to see her; but now that she was decently prosperous in the world, her sister-in-law came to her as a matter of course.

So did numbers more. Our old friend, Miss Swartz, and her husband came thundering over from Hampton Court, with flaming yellow liveries, and was as impetuously fond of Amelia as ever. Miss Swartz would have liked her always if she could have seen her. One must do her that justice. But, *que voulez vous?* — in this vast town one has not the time to go and seek one's friends; if they drop out of the rank they disappear, and we march on without them. Who is ever missed in Vanity Fair.

But so, in a word, and before the period of grief for Mr. Osborne's death had subsided, Emmy found herself in the centre of a very genteel circle indeed; the members of which could not conceive that anybody belonging to it was not very lucky. There was scarce one of the ladies that had n't a relation a peer, though the husband might be a drysalter in the City. Some of the ladies were very blue and well informed; reading Mrs. Somerville, and frequenting the Royal Institution; others were severe and Evangelical, and held by Exeter Hall. Emmy, it must be owned, found herself entirely at a loss in the midst of their clavers, and suffered wofully on the one or two occasions on which she was compelled to accept Mrs. Frederick Bullock's hospitalities. That lady persisted in patronizing her, and determined most graciously to form her. She found Amelia's milliners for her, and regulated her household and her manners. She drove over constantly from Roehampton, and entertained her friend with faint fashionable fiddlefaddle and feeble court slipslop. Jos liked to hear it, but

the Major used to go off growling at the appearance of this woman, with her twopenny gentility. He went to sleep under Frederick Bullock's bald head, after dinner, at one of the banker's best parties, (Fred was still anxious that the balance of the Osborne property should be transferred from Stumpy and Rowdy's to them), and whilst Amelia, who did not know Latin, or who wrote the last crack article in the Edinburgh, and did not in the least deplore, or otherwise, Mr. Peel's late extraordinary tergiversation on the fatal Catholic Relief Bill, sat dumb amongst the ladies in the grand drawing-room, looking out upon velvet lawns, trim gravel walks, and glistening hot-houses.

"She seems good-natured but insipid," said Mrs. Rowdy; "that Major seems to be particularly *épris*."

"She wants *ton* sadly," said Mrs. Hollyock. "My dear creature, you never will be able to form her."

"She is dreadfully ignorant or indifferent," said Mrs. Glowry, with a voice as if from the grave, and a sad shake of the head and turban. — "I asked her if she thought that it was in 1836, according to Mr. Jowls, or in 1839, according to Mr. Wapshot, that the Pope was to fall: and she said — 'Poor Pope! I hope not. — What has he done?'"

"She is my brother's widow, my dear friends," Mrs. Frederick replied, "and as such I think we're all bound to give her every attention and instruction on entering into the world. You may fancy there can be no *mercenary* motives in those whose *disappointments* are well known."

"That poor dear Mrs. Bullock," said Rowdy to Hollyock, as they drove away together — "she is always scheming and managing. She wants Mrs. Osborne's account to be taken from our house to hers

—and the way in which she coaxes that boy, and makes him sit by that blear-eyed little Rosa, is perfectly ridiculous."

"I wish Glowry was choked with her 'Man of Sin' and her 'Battle of Armageddon,'" cried the other; and the carriage rolled away over Putney Bridge.

But this sort of society was too cruelly genteel for Emmy: and all jumped for joy when a foreign tour was proposed.

CHAPTER VIII.

AM RHEIN.

THE above every-day events had occurred, and a few weeks had passed, when, on one fine morning, Parliament being over, the summer advanced, and all the good company in London about to quit that city for their annual tour in search of pleasure or health, the 'Batavier' steamboat left the Tower-stairs laden with a goodly company of English fugitives. The quarter-deck awnings were up, and the benches and gangways crowded with scores of rosy children, bustling nurse-maids, ladies in the prettiest pink bonnets and summer dresses, gentlemen in travelling caps and linen jackets, whose mustachios had just begun to sprout for the ensuing tour; and stout trim old veterans with starched neckcloths and neat-brushed hats, such as have invaded Europe any time since the conclusion of the war, and carry the national Goddem into every city of the Continent. The congregation of hat-boxes, and Bramah desks, and dressing-cases was prodigious. There were jaunty young Cambridge-men travelling with their tutor, and going for a reading excursion to Nonnenwerth or Königswinter: there were Irish gentlemen, with the most dashing whiskers and jewelry, talking about horses incessantly, and prodigiously polite to the young ladies on board, whom, on the contrary, the Cambridge lads and their pale-faced tutor avoided with maiden coyness: there were old Pall Mall loungers bound for Ems and Wiesbaden, and a course of waters to clear off the dinners of the season,

and a little *roulette* and *trente-et-quarante* to keep the excitement going; there was old Methuselah, who had married his young wife, with Captain Papillon of the Guards holding her parasol and guide-books: there was young May who was carrying off his bride on a pleasure tour (Mrs. Winter that was, and who had been at school with May's grandmother); there was Sir John and my lady with a dozen children, and corresponding nursemaids; and the great grandee Bareacres family that sat by themselves near the wheel, stared at everybody, and spoke to no one. Their carriages, emblazoned with coronets, and heaped with shining imperials, were on the fore-deck; locked in with a dozen more such vehicles: it was difficult to pass in and out amongst them: and the poor inmates of the fore-cabin had scarcely any space for locomotion. These consisted of a few magnificently attired gentlemen from Houndsditch, who brought their own provisions, and could have bought half the gay people in the grand saloon; a few honest fellows with mustachios and portfolios, who set to sketching before they had been half an hour on board; one or two French *femmes de chambre* who began to be dreadfully ill by the time the boat had passed Greenwich; a groom or two who lounged in the neighborhood of the horse-boxes under their charge, or leaned over the side by the paddle-wheels, and talked about who was good for the Leger, and what they stood to win or lose for the Goodwood cup.

All the couriers, when they had done plunging about the ship, and had settled their various masters in the cabins or on the deck, congregated together and began to chatter and smoke; the Hebrew gentlemen joining them and looking at the carriages. There was Sir John's great carriage that would hold thirteen

people; my Lord Methuselah's carriage, my Lord Bareacres's chariot, britzska, and *fourgon*, that anybody might pay for who liked. It was a wonder how my lord got the ready money to pay for the expenses of the journey. The Hebrew gentlemen knew how he got it. They knew what money his lordship had in his pocket at that instant, and what interest he paid for it, and who gave it him. Finally there was a very neat, handsome travelling carriage, about which the gentlemen speculated.

"*A qui cette voiture là?*" said one gentleman-courier with a large morocco money-bag and ear-rings, to another with ear-rings and a large morocco money-bag.

"*C'est à Kirsch je bense—je l'ai vu toute à l'heure—qui brenoit des sangviches dans la voiture,*" said the courier in a fine German French.

Kirsch emerging presently from the neighborhood of the hold, where he had been bellowing instructions intermingled with polyglot oaths to the ship's men engaged in secreting the passengers' luggage, came to give an account of himself to his brother interpreters. He informed them that the carriage belonged to a Nabob from Calcutta and Jamaica, enormously rich, and with whom he was engaged to travel; and at this moment a young gentleman who had been warned off the bridge between the paddle-boxes, and who had dropped thence on to the roof of Lord Methuselah's carriage, from which he made his way over other carriages and imperials until he had clambered on to his own, descended thence and through the window into the body of the carriage to the applause of the couriers looking on.

"*Nous allons avoir une belle traversée*, Monsieur George," said the courier with a grin, as he lifted his gold-laced cap.

"D—— your French," said the young gentleman, "where's the biscuits, ay?" Whereupon, Kirsch answered him in the English language or in such an imitation of it as he could command, — for though he was familiar with all languages, Mr. Kirsch was not acquainted with a single one, and spoke all with indifferent volubility and incorrectness.

The imperious young gentleman who gobbled the biscuits (and indeed it was time to refresh himself, for he had breakfasted at Richmond full three hours before), was our young friend George Osborne. Uncle Jos and his mamma were on the quarter-deck with a gentleman of whom they used to see a good deal, and the four were about to make a summer tour.

Jos was seated at that moment on deck under the awning, and pretty nearly opposite to the Earl of Bareacres and his family, whose proceedings absorbed the Bengalee almost entirely. Both the noble couple looked rather younger than in the eventful year '15, when Jos remembered to have seen them at Brussels (indeed he always gave out in India that he was intimately acquainted with them). Lady Bareacres's hair which was then dark was now a beautiful golden auburn, whereas Lord Bareacres's whiskers, formerly red, were at present of a rich black with purple and green reflections in the light. But changed as they were, the movements of the noble pair occupied Jos's mind entirely. The presence of a lord fascinated him, and he could look at nothing else.

"Those people seem to interest you a good deal," said Dobbin, laughing and watching him. Amelia too laughed. She was in a straw bonnet with black ribbons, and otherwise dressed in mourning: but the little bustle and holiday of the journey pleased and excited her, and she looked particularly happy.

A FINE SUMMER EVENING.

"What a heavenly day!" Emmy said, and added, with great originality, "I hope we shall have a calm passage."

Jos waved his hand, scornfully glancing at the same time under his eyelids at the great folks opposite. "If you had made the voyages we have," he said, "you would n't much care about the weather." But nevertheless, traveller as he was, he passed the night direfully sick in his carriage, where his courier tended him with brandy-and-water and every luxury.

In due time this happy party landed at the quays of Rotterdam, whence they were transported by another steamer to the city of Cologne. Here the carriage and the family took to the shore, and Jos was not a little gratified to see his arrival announced in the Cologne newspapers as "Herr Graf Lord von Sedley nebst Begleitung aus London." He had his court dress with him: he had insisted that Dobbin should bring his regimental paraphernalia: he announced that it was his intention to be presented at some foreign courts, and pay his respects to the sovereigns of the countries which he honored with a visit.

Wherever the party stopped, and an opportunity was offered, Mr. Jos left his own card and the Major's upon "Our Minister." It was with great difficulty that he could be restrained from putting on his cocked hat and tights to wait upon the English consul at the Free City of Judenstadt, when that hospitable functionary asked our travellers to dinner. He kept a journal of his voyage, and noted elaborately the defects or excellences of the various inns at which he put up, and of the wines and dishes of which he partook.

As for Emmy, she was very happy and pleased. Dobbin used to carry about for her her stool and

sketch-book, and admired the drawings of the good-natured little artist, as they never had been admired before. She sat upon steamers' decks and drew crags and castles, or she mounted upon donkeys and ascended to ancient robber-towers, attended by her two *aides-de-camp*, Georgy and Dobbin. She laughed, and the Major did too, at his droll figure on donkey-back, with his long legs touching the ground. He was the interpreter for the party, having a good military knowledge of the German language; and he and the delighted George fought the campaigns of the Rhine and the Palatinate. In the course of a few weeks, and by assiduously conversing with Herr Kirsch on the box of the carriage, Georgy made prodigious advance in the knowledge of High Dutch, and could talk to hotel waiters and postilions in a way that charmed his mother, and amused his guardian.

Mr. Jos did not much engage in the afternoon excursions of his fellow-travellers. He slept a good deal after dinner, or basked in the arbors of the pleasant inn-gardens. Pleasant Rhine gardens! Fair scenes of peace and sunshine — noble purple mountains, whose crests are reflected in the magnificent stream — who has ever seen you, that has not a grateful memory of those scenes of friendly repose and beauty? To lay down the pen, and even to think of that beautiful Rhineland makes one happy. At this time of summer evening, the cows are trooping down from the hills, lowing and with their bells tinkling, to the old town, with its old moats, and gates, and spires, and chestnut-trees, with long blue shadows stretching over the grass; the sky and the river below flame in crimson and gold; and the moon is already out, looking pale towards the sunset. The sun sinks behind the great castle-crested mountains, the night

falls suddenly, the river grows darker and darker, lights quiver in it from the windows in the old ramparts, and twinkle peacefully in the villages under the hills on the opposite shore.

So Jos used to go to sleep a good deal with his bandanna over his face and be very comfortable, and read all the English news, and every word of Galignani's admirable newspaper (may the blessings of all Englishmen who have ever been abroad rest on the founders and proprietors of that piratical print!) and whether he woke or slept his friends did not very much miss him. Yes, they were very happy. They went to the Opera often of evenings — to those snug, unassuming, dear old operas in the German towns, where the *noblesse* sits and cries, and knits stockings on the one side, over against the *bourgeoisie* on the other; and His Transparency the Duke and his Transparent family, all very fat and good-natured, come and occupy the great box in the middle; and the pit is full of the most elegant slim-waisted officers with straw-colored mustachios, and twopence a-day on full pay. Here it was that Emmy found her delight, and was introduced for the first time to the wonders of Mozart and Cimarosa. The Major's musical taste has been before alluded to, and his performances on the flute commended. But perhaps the chief pleasure he had in these operas was in watching Emmy's rapture while listening to them. A new world of love and beauty broke upon her when she was introduced to those divine compositions: this lady had the keenest and finest sensibility, and how could she be indifferent when she heard Mozart? The tender parts of "Don Juan" awakened in her raptures so exquisite that she would ask herself when she went to say her prayers of a night, whether it was not wicked to feel so much

delight as that with which "Vedrai Carino" and "Batti Batti" filled her gentle little bosom? But the Major, whom she consulted upon this head, as her theological adviser (and who himself had a pious and reverent soul), said that for his part, every beauty of art or nature made him thankful as well as happy; and that the pleasure to be had in listening to fine music, as in looking at the stars in the sky, or at a beautiful landscape or picture, was a benefit for which we might thank Heaven as sincerely as for any other worldly blessing. And in reply to some faint objections of Mrs. Amelia's (taken from certain theological works like the "Washerwoman of Finchley Common" and others of that school, with which Mrs. Osborne had been furnished during her life at Brompton) he told her an Eastern fable of the Owl who thought that the sunshine was unbearable for the eyes, and that the Nightingale was a most overrated bird. "It is one's nature to sing and the other's to hoot," he said laughing, "and with such a sweet voice as you have yourself, you must belong to the Bulbul faction."

I like to dwell upon this period of her life, and to think that she was cheerful and happy. You see she has not had too much of that sort of existence as yet, and has not fallen in the way of means to educate her tastes or her intelligence. She has been domineered over hitherto by vulgar intellects. It is the lot of many a woman. And as every one of the dear sex is the rival of the rest of her kind, timidity passes for folly in their charitable judgments; and gentleness for dulness; and silence — which is but timid denial of the unwelcome assertion of ruling folks, and tacit protestantism — above all, finds no mercy at the hands of the female Inquisition. Thus, my dear and civilized reader, if you and I were to find ourselves this evening

in a society of green-grocers, let us say, it is probable that our conversation would not be brilliant; if, on the other hand, a green-grocer should find himself at your refined and polite tea-table, where everybody was saying witty things, and everybody of fashion and repute tearing her friends to pieces in the most delightful manner, it is possible that the stranger would not be very talkative, and by no means interesting or interested.

And it must be remembered, that this poor lady had never met a gentleman in her life until this present moment. Perhaps these are rarer personages than some of us think for. Which of us can point out many such in his circle — men whose aims are generous, whose truth is constant, and not only constant in its kind but elevated in its degree; whose want of meanness makes them simple: who can look the world honestly in the face with an equal manly sympathy for the great and the small? We all know a hundred whose coats are very well made, and a score who have excellent manners, and one or two happy beings who are what they call, in the inner circles, and have shot into the very centre and bull's-eye of the fashion; but of gentlemen how many? Let us take a little scrap of paper and each make out his list.

My friend the Major I write, without any doubt, in mine. He had very long legs, a yellow face, and a slight lisp, which at first was rather ridiculous. But his thoughts were just, his brains were fairly good, his life was honest and pure, and his heart warm and humble. He certainly had very large hands and feet, which the two George Osbornes used to caricature and laugh at; and their jeers and laughter perhaps led poor little Emmy astray as to his worth. But have we not all been misled about our heroes,

and changed our opinions a hundred times? Emmy, in this happy time, found that hers underwent a very great change in respect of the merits of the Major.

Perhaps it was the happiest time of both their lives indeed, if they did but know it — and who does? Which of us can point out and say that was the culmination — that was the summit of human joy? But at all events, this couple were very decently contented, and enjoyed as pleasant a summer tour as any pair that left England that year. Georgy was always present at the play, but it was the Major who put Emmy's shawl on after the entertainment; and in the walks and excursions the young lad would be on a-head, and up a tower-stair or a tree, whilst the soberer couple were below, the Major smoking his cigar with great placidity and constancy, whilst Emmy sketched the site or the ruin. It was on this very tour that I, the present writer of a history of which every word is true, had the pleasure to see them first, and to make their acquaintance.

It was at the little comfortable Ducal town of Pumpernickel (that very place where Sir Pitt Crawley had been so distinguished as an *attaché*; but that was in early early days, and before the news of the battle of Austerlitz sent all the English diplomatists in Germany to the right about) that I first saw Colonel Dobbin and his party. They had arrived with the carriage and courier at the Erbprinz Hotel, the best of the town, and the whole party dined at the *table d'hôte*. Everybody remarked the majesty of Jos, and the knowing way in which he sipped, or rather sucked, the Johannisberger, which he ordered for dinner. The little boy, too, we observed, had a famous appetite, and consumed *schinken*, and *braten*, and *kart-*

offeln, and cranberry jam, and salad, and pudding, and roast fowls, and sweetmeats, with a gallantry that did honor to his nation. After about fifteen dishes, he concluded the repast with dessert, some of which he even carried out of doors; for some young gentlemen at table, amused with his coolness and gallant free and easy manner, induced him to pocket a handful of macaroons, which he discussed on his way to the theatre, whither everybody went in the cheery social little German place. The lady in black, the boy's mamma, laughed and blushed, and looked exceedingly pleased and shy as the dinner went on, and at the various feats and instances of *espièglerie* on the part of her son. The Colonel — for so he became very soon afterwards — I remember joked the boy with a great deal of grave fun, pointing out dishes which he *had n't* tried, and entreating him not to balk his appetite, but to have a second supply of this or that.

It was what they call a *gast-rolle* night at the Royal Grand Ducal Pumpernickelisch Hof, — or Court Theatre; and Madame Schroeder Devrient, then in the bloom of her beauty and genius, performed the part of the heroine in the wonderful opera of "Fidelio." From our places in the stalls we could see our four friends of the *table d'hôte*, in the loge which Schwendler of the Erbprinz kept for his best guests; and I could not help remarking the effect which the magnificent actress and music produced upon Mrs. Osborne, for so we heard the stout gentleman in the mustachios call her. During the astonishing Chorus of the Prisoners, over which the delightful voice of the actress rose and soared in the most ravishing harmony, the English lady's face wore such an expression of wonder and delight that it struck even little Fipps, the *blasé attaché*, who drawled out, as

he fixed his glass upon her, "Gayd, it really does one good to see a woman caypable of that stayt of excaytement." And in the Prison Scene where Fidelio, rushing to her husband, cries, *Nichts nichts mein Florestan*, she fairly lost herself and covered her face with her handkerchief. Every woman in the house was snivelling at the time: but I suppose it was because it was predestined that I was to write this particular lady's memoirs that I remarked her.

The next day they gave another piece of Beethoven, "Die Schlacht bei Vittoria." "Malbrook" is introduced at the beginning of the performance, as indicative of the brisk advance of the French Army. Then come drums, trumpets, thunders of artillery, and groans of the dying, and at last in a grand triumphant swell, "God Save the King" is performed.

There may have been a score of Englishmen in the house, but at the burst of that beloved and well-known music, every one of them, — we young fellows in the stalls, Sir John and Lady Bullminster (who had taken a house at Pumpernickel for the education of their nine children), the fat gentleman with the mustachios, the long Major in white duck trousers, and the lady with the little boy upon whom he was so sweet: even Kirsch, the courier in the gallery, stood bolt upright in their places, and proclaimed themselves to be members of the dear old British nation. As for Tapeworm, the *Chargé d'Affaires*, he rose up in his box and bowed and simpered, as if he would represent the whole empire. Tapeworm was nephew and heir of old Marshal Tiptoff, who has been introduced in this story as General Tiptoff, just before Waterloo, who was Colonel of the — th regiment in which Major Dobbin served, and who died in this year full of honors, and of an aspic of plovers' eggs; when the regiment was graciously

given by his Majesty to Colonel Sir Michael O'Dowd, K. C. B., who had commanded it in many glorious fields.

Tapeworm must have met with Colonel Dobbin at the house of the Colonel's Colonel, the Marshal, for he recognized him on this night at the theatre; and with the utmost condescension, his Majesty's minister came over from his own box, and publicly shook hands with his new-found friend.

"Look at that infernal sly-boots of a Tapeworm," Fipps whispered, examining his chief from the stalls. "Wherever there's a pretty woman he always twists himself in." And I wonder what were diplomatists made for but for that?

"Have I the honor of addressing myself to Mrs. Dobbin?" asked the Secretary, with a most insinuating grin.

Georgy burst out laughing, and said, "By Jove, that *is* a good un." — Emmy and the Major blushed: we saw them from the stalls.

"This lady is Mrs. George Osborne," said the Major, "and this is her brother, Mr. Sedley, a distinguished officer of the Bengal Civil Service: permit me to introduce him to your lordship."

My lord nearly sent Jos off his legs, with the most fascinating smile. "Are you going to stop in Pumpernickel?" he said. "It is a dull place: but we want some nice people, and we would try and make it *so* agreeable to you. Mr. — Ahum — Mrs. — Oho. I shall do myself the honor of calling upon you to-morrow at your inn." And he went away with a Parthian grin and glance, which he thought must finish Mrs. Osborne completely.

The performance over, the young fellows lounged about the lobbies, and we saw the society take its de-

parture. The Duchess Dowager went off in her jingling old coach, attended by two faithful and withered old maids-of-honor, and a little snuffy spindle-shanked gentleman-in-waiting, in a brown jasey and a green coat covered with orders — of which the star and the grand yellow cordon of the order of Saint Michael of Pumpernickel were most conspicuous. The drums rolled, the guards saluted, and the old carriage drove away.

Then came his Transparency, the Duke and Transparent family, with his great officers of state and household. He bowed serenely to everybody. And amid the saluting of the guards, and the flaring of the torches of the running footmen, clad in scarlet, the Transparent carriages drove away to the old Ducal Schloss, with its towers and pinnacles standing on the Schlossberg. Everybody in Pumpernickel knew everybody. No sooner was a foreigner seen there, than the Minister of Foreign Affairs, or some other great or small officer of state, went round to the Erbprinz, and found out the name of the new arrivals.

We watched them, too, out of the theatre. Tapeworm had just walked off, enveloped in his cloak, with which his gigantic *chasseur* was always in attendance, and looking as much as possible like Don Juan. The Prime Minister's lady had just squeezed herself into her sedan, and her daughter, the charming Ida, had put on her calash and clogs: when the English party came out, the boy yawning drearily, the Major taking great pains in keeping the shawl over Mrs. Osborne's head, and Mr. Sedley, looking grand, with a crush opera-hat on one side of his head, and his hand in the stomach of a voluminous white waistcoat. We took off our hats to our acquaintances of the *table d'hôte*, and the lady, in return, presented us with a little

smile and a curtsy, for which everybody might be thankful.

The carriage from the inn, under the superintendence of the bustling Mr. Kirsch, was in waiting to convey the party; but the fat man said he would walk, and smoke his cigar on his way homeward; so the other three, with nods and smiles to us, went without Mr. Sedley; Kirsch, with the cigar-case, following in his master's wake.

We all walked together, and talked to the stout gentleman about the *agrémens* of the place. It was very agreeable for the English. There were shooting-parties and *battues;* there was a plenty of balls and entertainments at the hospitable court; the society was generally good; the theatre excellent, and the living cheap.

"And our Minister seems a most delightful and affable person," our new friend said. "With such a representative, and — and a good medical man, I can fancy the place to be most eligible. Good night, gentlemen." And Jos creaked up the stairs to bedward, followed by Kirsch with a flambeau. We rather hoped that nice-looking woman would be induced to stay some time in the town.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH WE MEET AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

Such polite behavior as that of Lord Tapeworm did not fail to have the most favorable effect upon Mr. Sedley's mind, and the very next morning, at breakfast, he pronounced his opinion that Pumpernickel was the pleasantest little place of any which he had visited on their tour. Jos's motives and artifices were not very difficult of comprehension: and Dobbin laughed in his sleeve, like a hypocrite as he was, when he found by the knowing air of the civilian and the off-hand manner in which the latter talked about Tapeworm Castle, and the other members of the family, that Jos had been up already in the morning, consulting his travelling Peerage. Yes, he had seen the Right Honorable the Earl of Bagwig, his lordship's father; he was sure he had, he had met him at — at the levee — did n't Dob remember? and when the Diplomatist called on the party, faithful to his promise, Jos received him with such a salute and honors as were seldom accorded to the little Envoy. He winked at Kirsch on his Excellency's arrival, and that emissary instructed beforehand, went out and superintended an entertainment of cold meats, jellies, and other delicacies, brought in upon trays, and of which Mr. Jos absolutely insisted that his noble guest should partake.

Tapeworm, so long as he could have an opportunity of admiring the bright eyes of Mrs. Osborne (whose

freshness of complexion bore daylight remarkably well) was not ill pleased to accept any invitation to stay in Mr. Sedley's lodgings; he put one or two dexterous questions to him about India and the dancing-girls there; asked Amelia about that beautiful boy who had been with her, and complimented the astonished little woman upon the prodigious sensation which she had made in the house; and tried to fascinate Dobbin by talking of the late war, and the exploits of the Pumpernickel contingent under the command of the Hereditary Prince, now Duke of Pumpernickel.

Lord Tapeworm inherited no little portion of the family gallantry, and it was his happy belief, that almost every woman upon whom he himself cast friendly eyes, was in love with him. He left Emmy under the persuasion that she was slain by his wit and attractions, and went home to his lodgings to write a pretty little note to her. She was not fascinated; only puzzled by his grinning, his simpering, his scented cambric handkerchief, and his high-heeled lacquered boots. She did not understand one half the compliments which he paid; she had never, in her small experience of mankind, met a professional ladies' man as yet, and looked upon my lord as something curious rather than pleasant; and if she did not admire, certainly wondered at him. Jos, on the contrary, was delighted. "How very affable his lordship is," he said; "How very kind of his lordship to say he would send his medical man! Kirsch, you will carry our cards to the Count de Schlüsselback directly: the Major and I will have the greatest pleasure in paying our respects at court as soon as possible. Put out my uniform, Kirsch, — both our uniforms. It is a mark of politeness which

every English gentleman ought to show to the countries which he visits, to pay his respects to the sovereigns of those countries as to the representatives of his own."

When Tapeworm's doctor came, Doctor von Glauber, Body Physician to H. S. H. the Duke, he speedily convinced Jos that the Pumpernickel mineral springs and the doctor's particular treatment would infallibly restore the Bengalee to youth and slimness. "Dere came here last year," he said, "Sheneral Bulkeley, an English Sheneral, tvice so pic as you, sir. I sent him back qvite tin after tree months, and he danced vid Baroness Glauber at the end of two."

Jos's mind was made up, the springs, the doctor, the court, and the *Chargé d' Affaires* convinced him, and he proposed to spend the autumn in these delightful quarters. — And punctual to his word, on the next day the *Chargé d' Affaires* presented Jos and the Major to Victor Aurelius XVII., being conducted to their audience with that sovereign by the Count de Schlüsselback, Marshal of the Court.

They were straightway invited to dinner at court, and their intention of staying in the town being announced, the politest ladies of the whole town instantly called upon Mrs. Osborne; and as not one of these, however poor they might be, was under the rank of a Baroness, Jos's delight was beyond expression. He wrote off to Chutney at the club to say that the Service was highly appreciated in Germany, that he was going to show his friend, the Count de Schlüsselback, how to stick a pig in the Indian fashion, and that his august friends, the Duke and Duchess, were everything that was kind and civil.

Emmy, too, was presented to the august family,

Jos performs a Polonaise.

and as mourning is not admitted in court on certain days, she appeared in a pink crape dress, with a diamond ornament in the corsage, presented to her by her brother, and she looked so pretty in this costume that the Duke and Court (putting out of the question the Major, who had scarcely ever seen her before in an evening dress, and vowed that she did not look five-and-twenty) all admired her excessively.

In this dress she walked a Polonaise with Major Dobbin at a court ball, in which easy dance Mr. Jos had the honor of leading out the Countess of Schlüsselback, an old lady with a hump back, but with sixteen good quarters of nobility, and related to half the royal houses of Germany.

Pumpernickel stands in the midst of a happy valley, through which sparkles — to mingle with the Rhine somewhere, but I have not the map at hand to say exactly at what point — the fertilizing stream of the Pump. In some places the river is big enough to support a ferry-boat, in others to turn a mill; in Pumpernickel itself, the last Transparency but three, the great and renowned Victor Aurelius XIV. built a magnificent bridge, on which his own statue rises, surrounded by water-nymphs and emblems of victory, peace, and plenty; he has his foot on the neck of a prostrate Turk — history says he engaged and ran a Janissary through the body at the relief of Vienna by Sobieski, — but, quite undisturbed by the agonies of that prostrate Mahometan, who writhes at his feet in the most ghastly manner, the Prince smiles blandly, and points with his truncheon in the direction of the Aurelius Platz, where he began to erect a new palace that would have been the wonder of his age, had the great-souled Prince

but had funds to complete it. But the completion of Monplaisir (*Monblaisir* the honest German folks call it) was stopped for lack of ready money, and it and its park and garden are now in rather a faded condition, and not more than ten times big enough to accommodate the court of the reigning Sovereign.

The gardens were arranged to emulate those of Versailles, and amidst the terraces and groves there are some huge allegorical water-works still, which spout and froth stupendously upon fête-days, and frighten one with their enormous aquatic insurrections. There is the Trophonius' cave in which, by some artifice, the leaden Tritons are made not only to spout water, but to play the most dreadful groans out of their lead conches — there is the Nymph-bath and the Niagara cataract, which the people of the neighborhood admire beyond expression, when they come to the yearly fair at the opening of the Chamber, or to the fêtes with which the happy little nation still celebrates the birth-days and marriage-days of its princely governors.

Then from all the towns of the Duchy which stretches for nearly ten miles, — from Bolkum, which lies on its western frontier bidding defiance to Prussia, from Grogwitz where the Prince has a hunting-lodge, and where his dominions are separated by the Pump river from those of the neighboring Prince of Potzenthal; from all the little villages, which besides these three great cities, dot over the happy Principality — from the farms and the mills along the Pump, come troops of people in red petticoats and velvet head-dresses, or with three-cornered hats, and pipes in their mouths, who flock to the *Residenz* and share in the pleasures of the fair and the festivities there. Then the theatre is open for nothing,

then the waters of Monblaisir begin to play (it is lucky that there is company to behold them, for one would be afraid to see them alone) — then there come mountebanks and riding troops (the way in which his Transparency was fascinated by one of the horse-riders, is well known, and it is believed that *La Petite Vivandière*, as she was called, was a spy in the French interest), and the delighted people are permitted to march through room after room of the Grand Ducal palace, and admire the slippery floor, the rich hangings, and the spittoons at the doors of all the innumerable chambers. There is one Pavilion at Monblaisir which Aurelius Victor XV. had arranged — a great Prince but too fond of pleasure — and which I am told is a perfect wonder of licentious elegance. It is painted with the story of Bacchus and Ariadne, and the table works in and out of the room by means of a windlass so that the company was served without any intervention of domestics. But the place was shut up by Barbara, Aurelius XV.'s widow, a severe and devout Princess of the House of Bolkum and Regent of the Duchy during her son's glorious minority, and after the death of her husband, cut off in the pride of his pleasures.

The theatre of Pumpernickel is known and famous in that quarter of Germany. It languished a little when the present Duke in his youth insisted upon having his own operas played there, and it is said one day, in a fury, from his place in the orchestra, when he attended a rehearsal, broke a bassoon on the head of the Chapel Master, who was conducting, and led too slow; and during which time the Duchess Sophia wrote domestic comedies which must have been very dreary to witness. But the Prince executes his music

in private now, and the Duchess only gives away her plays to the foreigners of distinction who visit her kind little court.

It is conducted with no small comfort and splendor. When there are balls, though there may be four hundred people at supper, there is a servant in scarlet and lace to attend upon every four, and every one is served on silver. There are festivals and entertainments going continually on; and the Duke has his chamberlains and equerries, and the Duchess her mistress of the wardrobe and ladies-of-honor just like any other and more potent potentates.

The Constitution is or was a moderate despotism, tempered by a Chamber that might or might not be elected. I never certainly could hear of its sitting in my time at Pumpernickel. The Prime Minister had lodgings in a second floor; and the Foreign Secretary occupied the comfortable lodgings over Zwieback's Conditorey. The army consisted of a magnificent band that also did duty on the stage, where it was quite pleasant to see the worthy fellows marching in Turkish dresses with rouge on and wooden scimitars, or as Roman warriors with ophicleides and trombones, — to see them again, I say, at night, after one had listened to them all the morning in the Aurelius Platz, where they performed opposite the Café where we breakfasted. Besides the band, there was a rich and numerous staff of officers, and, I believe, a few men. Besides the regular sentries, three or four men, habited as hussars, used to do duty at the Palace, but I never saw them on horseback, and *au fait*, what was the use of cavalry in a time of profound peace? — and whither the deuce should the hussars ride?

Everybody — everybody that was noble of course, for as for the *bourgeois* we could not quite be ex-

pected to take notice of *them* — visited his neighbor. H. E. Madame de Burst received once a week, H. E. Madame de Schnurrbart had her night — the theatre was open twice a week, the court graciously received once, so that a man's life might in fact be a perfect round of pleasure in the unpretending Pumpernickel way.

That there were feuds in the place, no one can deny. Politics ran very high at Pumpernickel, and parties were very bitter. There was the Strumpff faction and the Lederlung party, the one supported by our Envoy and the other by the French *Chargé d'Affaires*, M. de Macabau. Indeed it sufficed for our Minister to stand up for Madame Strumpff, who was clearly the greater singer of the two, and had three more notes in her voice than Madame Lederlung her rival — it sufficed, I say, for our Minister to advance *any* opinion to have it instantly contradicted by the French diplomatist.

Everybody in the town was ranged in one or other of these factions. The Lederlung was a prettyish little creature certainly, and her voice (what there was of it) was very sweet, and there is no doubt that the Strumpff was not in her first youth and beauty, and certainly too stout; when she came on in the last scene of the "Sonnambula" for instance, in her night-chemise with a lamp in her hand, and had to go out of the window, and pass over the plank of the mill, it was all she could do to squeeze out of the window, and the plank used to bend and creak again under her weight — but how she poured out the finale of the opera! and with what a burst of feeling she rushed into Elvino's arms — almost fit to smother him! Whereas the little Lederlung — but a truce to this gossip — the fact is, that these two women were the

two flags of the French and the English party at Pumpernickel, and the society was divided in its allegiance to those two great nations.

We had on our side the Home Minister, the Master of the Horse, the Duke's Private Secretary, and the Prince's Tutor: whereas of the French party were the Foreign Minister, the Commander-in-Chief's lady, who had served under Napoleon, and the *Hof-Marschall* and his wife, who was glad enough to get the fashions from Paris, and always had them and her caps by M. de Macabau's courier. The Secretary of his Chancery was little Grignac, a young fellow, as malicious as Satan, and who made caricatures of Tapeworm in all the albums of the place.

Their headquarters and *table d'hôte* were established at the Pariser Hof, the other inn of the town; and though, of course, these gentlemen were obliged to be civil in public, yet they cut at each other with epigrams that were as sharp as razors, as I have seen a couple of wrestlers in Devonshire, lashing at each other's shins, and never showing their agony upon a muscle of their faces. Neither Tapeworm nor Macabau ever sent home a despatch to his government, without a most savage series of attacks upon his rival. For instance, on our side we would write, "The interests of Great Britain in this place, and throughout the whole of Germany, are perilled by the continuance in office of the present French envoy; this man is of a character so infamous that he will stick at no falsehood, or hesitate at no crime, to attain his ends. He poisons the mind of the court against the English minister, represents the conduct of Great Britain in the most odious and atrocious light, and is unhappily backed by a minister whose ignorance and necessities are as notorious as his influence

is fatal." On their side they would say, "M. de Tapeworm continues his system of stupid insular arrogance and vulgar falsehood against the greatest nation in the world. Yesterday he was heard to speak lightly of Her Royal Highness Madame the Duchess of Berri: on a former occasion he insulted the heroic Duke of Angoulême, and dared to insinuate that H.R.H. the Duke of Orleans was conspiring against the august throne of the lilies. His gold is prodigated in every direction which his stupid menaces fail to frighten. By one and the other, he has won over creatures of the court here, — and, in fine, Pumpernickel will not be quiet, Germany tranquil, France respected, or Europe content, until this poisonous viper be crushed under heel:" and so on. When one side or the other had written any particularly spicy despatch, news of it was sure to slip out.

Before the winter was far advanced it is actually on record that Emmy took a night and received company with great propriety and modesty. She had a French master who complimented her upon the purity of her accent and her facility of learning; the fact is she had learned long ago, and grounded herself subsequently in the grammar so as to be able to teach it to George; and Madame Strumpff came to give her lessons in singing, which she performed so well and with such a true voice that the Major's windows, who had lodgings opposite under the Prime Minister, were always open to hear the lesson. Some of the German ladies, who are very sentimental and simple in their tastes, fell in love with her and began to call her *du* at once. These are trivial details, but they relate to happy times. The Major made himself George's tutor, and read Cæsar and mathematics with him, and they had a German master, and rode out of

evenings by the side of Emmy's carriage — she was always too timid, and made a dreadful outcry at the slightest disturbance on horseback. So she drove about with one of her dear German friends, and Jos asleep on the back-seat of the barouche.

He was becoming very sweet upon the Gräfinn Fanny de Butterbrod, a very gentle tender-hearted and unassuming young creature, a Canoness and Countess in her own right, but with scarcely ten pounds per year to her fortune, and Fanny for her part declared that to be Amelia's sister was the greatest delight that Heaven could bestow on her, and Jos might have put a Countess's shield and coronet by the side of his own arms on his carriage and forks; when — when events occurred, and those grand fêtes given upon the marriage of the Hereditary Prince of Pumpernickel with the lovely Princess Amelia of Humbourg-Schlippenschloppen took place.

At this festival the magnificence displayed was such as had not been known in the little German place since the days of the prodigal Victor XIV. All the neighboring Princes, Princesses, and Grandees were invited to the feast. Beds rose to half-a-crown per night in Pumpernickel, and the army was exhausted in providing guards of honor for the Highnesses, Serenities, and Excellencies, who arrived from all quarters. The Princess was married by proxy, at her father's residence, by the Count de Schlüsselback. Snuff-boxes were given away in profusion (as we learned from the court-jeweller, who sold and afterwards bought them again), and bushels of the Order of Saint Michael of Pumpernickel were sent to the nobles of the court, while hampers of the cordons and decorations of the Wheel of Saint Catherine of Schlippenschloppen were brought to ours. The

French envoy got both. "He is covered with ribbons like a prize cart-horse," Tapeworm said, who was not allowed by the rules of his service to take any decorations: "Let him have the cordons; but with whom is the victory?" The fact is, it was a triumph of British diplomacy: the French party having proposed and tried their utmost to carry a marriage with a Princess of the house of Potztausend-Donnerwetter, whom, as a matter of course, we opposed.

Everybody was asked to the fêtes of the marriage. Garlands and triumphal arches were hung across the road to welcome the young bride. The great Saint Michael's Fountain ran with uncommonly sour wine, while that in the Artillery Place frothed with beer. The great waters played; and poles were put up in the park and gardens for the happy peasantry, which they might climb at their leisure, carrying off watches, silver forks, prize sausages hung with pink ribbon, etc., at the top. Georgy got one, wrenching it off, having swarmed up the pole to the delight of the spectators, and sliding down with the rapidity of a fall of water. But it was for the glory's sake merely. The boy gave the sausage to a peasant, who had very nearly seized it, and stood at the foot of the mast, blubbering, because he was unsuccessful.

At the French *Chancellerie* they had six more lampions in their illumination than ours had; but our transparency, which represented the young Couple advancing, and Discord flying away, with the most ludicrous likeness to the French ambassador, beat the French picture hollow; and I have no doubt got Tapeworm the advancement and the Cross of the Bath, which he subsequently attained.

Crowds of foreigners arrived for the fêtes: and of English of course. Besides the court balls, public

balls were given at the Town Hall and the *Redoute*, and in the former place there was a room for *trente-et-quarante* and *roulette* established, for the week of the festivities only, and by one of the great German companies from Ems, or Aix-la-Chapelle. The officers or inhabitants of the town were not allowed to play at these games, but strangers, peasants, ladies were admitted, and any one who chose to lose or win money.

The little scapegrace Georgy Osborne amongst others, whose pockets were always full of dollars, and whose relations were away at the grand festival of the court, came to the Stadthaus ball in company of his uncle's courier, Mr. Kirsch, and having only peeped into a play-room at Baden Baden when he hung on Dobbin's arm, and where, of course, he was not permitted to gamble, came eagerly to this part of the entertainment, and hankered round the tables where the croupiers and the punters were at work. Women were playing; they were masked, some of them; this license was allowed in these wild times of carnival.

A woman with light hair, in a low dress, by no means so fresh as it had been, and with a black mask on, through the eyelets of which her eyes twinkled strangely, was seated at one of the roulette-tables with a card and a pin, and a couple of florins before her. As the croupier called out the color and number, she pricked on the card with great care and regularity, and only ventured her money on the colors after the red or black had come up a certain number of times. It was strange to look at her.

But in spite of her care and assiduity she guessed wrong, and the last two florins followed each other under the croupier's rake, as he cried out with his

inexorable voice, the winning color and number. She gave a sigh, a shrug with her shoulders, which were already too much out of her gown, and dashing the pin through the card on to the table, sat thrumming it for a while. Then she looked round her, and saw Georgy's honest face staring at the scene. The little scamp! what business had he to be there?

When she saw the boy, at whose face she looked hard through her shining eyes and mask, she said, "*Monsieur n'est pas joueur?*"

"*Non, Madame,*" said the boy: but she must have known, from his accent, of what country he was, for she answered him with a slight foreign tone. "You have nevare played — will you do me a littl' favor?"

"What is it?" said Georgy, blushing again. Mr. Kirsch was at work for his part at the *rouge et noir*, and did not see his young master.

"Play this for me, if you please, put it on any number, any number." And she took from her bosom a purse, and out of it a gold piece, the only coin there, and she put it into George's hand. The boy laughed, and did as he was bid.

The number came up, sure enough. There is a power that arranges that, they say, for beginners.

"Thank you," said she, pulling the money towards her; "thank you. What is your name?"

"My name's Osborne," said Georgy, and was fingering in his own pockets for dollars, and just about to make a trial, when the Major, in his uniform, and Jos, *en Marquis*, from the court ball, made their appearance. Other people finding the entertainment stupid, and preferring the fun at the Stadthaus, had quitted the Palace ball earlier; but it is probable the Major and Jos had gone home and found the boy's absence, for the former instantly went up to him, and

taking him by the shoulder, pulled him briskly back from the place of temptation. Then, looking round the room, he saw Kirsch employed as we have said, and going up to him, asked how he dared to bring Mr. George to such a place.

"*Laissez-moi tranquille,*" said Mr. Kirsch, very much excited by play and wine. "*Il faut s'amuser, parbleu. Je ne suis pas au service de Monsieur.*"

Seeing his condition the Major did not choose to argue with the man; but contented himself with drawing away George, and asking Jos if he would come away. He was standing close by the lady in the mask, who was playing with pretty good luck now; and looking on much interested at the game.

"Had n't you better come, Jos," the Major said, "with George and me?"

"I 'll stop and go home with that rascal, Kirsch," Jos said; and for the same reason of modesty, which he thought ought to be preserved before the boy, Dobbin did not care to remonstrate with Jos, but left him and walked home with Georgy.

"Did you play?" asked the Major when they were out, and on their way home.

The boy said "No."

"Give me your word of honor as a gentleman, that you never will."

"Why?" said the boy: "It seems very good fun." And, in a very eloquent and impressive manner, the Major showed him why he should n't, and would have enforced his precepts by the example of Georgy's own father, had he liked to say anything that should reflect on the other's memory. When he had housed him he went to bed, and saw his light, in the little room outside of Amelia's, presently disappear. Amelia's followed half an hour after-

wards. I don't know what made the Major note it so accurately.

Jos, however, remained behind over the play-table; he was no gambler, but not averse to the little excitement of the sport now and then; and he had some Napoleons chinking in the embroidered pockets of his court waistcoat. He put down one over the fair shoulder of the little gambler before him, and they won. She made a little movement to make room for him by her side, and just took the skirt of her gown from a vacant chair there.

"Come and give me good luck," she said, still in a foreign accent, quite different from that frank and perfectly English "Thank you," with which she had saluted George's *coup* in her favor. The portly gentleman, looking round to see that nobody of rank observed him, sat down; he muttered — "Ah, really, well now, God bless my soul. I 'm very fortunate; I 'm sure to give you good fortune," and other words of compliment and confusion.

"Do you play much?" the foreign mask said.

"I put a Nap or two down," said Jos, with a superb air, flinging down a gold piece.

"Yes; ay nap after dinner," said the mask, archly. But Jos looking frightened, she continued in her pretty French accent, "You do not play to win. No more do I. I play to forget, but I cannot. I cannot forget old times, Monsieur. Your little nephew is the image of his father; and you — you are not changed — but yes, you are. Everybody changes, everybody forgets; nobody has any heart."

"Good God, who is it?" asked Jos in a flutter.

"Can't you guess, Joseph Sedley?" said the little woman, in a sad voice, and undoing her mask, she looked at him. "You have forgotten me."

"Good heavens! Mrs. Crawley!" gasped out Jos.

"Rebecca," said the other, putting her hand on his; but she followed the game still, all the time she was looking at him.

"I am stopping at the Elephant," she continued. "Ask for Madame de Raudon. I saw my dear Amelia to-day; how pretty she looked, and how happy! So do you! Everybody but me, who am wretched, Joseph Sedley." And she put her money over from the red to the black, as if by a chance movement of her hand, and while she was wiping her eyes with a pocket-handkerchief fringed with torn lace.

The red came up again, and she lost the whole of that stake. "Come away," she said. "Come with me a little — we are old friends, are we not, dear Mr. Sedley?"

And Mr. Kirsch having lost all his money by this time, followed his master out into the moonlight, where the illuminations were winking out, and the transparency over our mission was scarcely visible.

CHAPTER X.

A VAGABOND CHAPTER.

We must pass over a part of Mrs. Rebecca Crawley's biography with that lightness and delicacy which the world demands — the moral world, that has, perhaps, no particular objection to vice, but an insuperable repugnance to hearing vice called by its proper name. There are things we do and know perfectly well in Vanity Fair, though we never speak of them: as the Ahrimanians worship the devil, but don't mention him: and a polite public will no more bear to read an authentic description of vice than a truly-refined English or American female will permit the word breeches to be pronounced in her chaste hearing. And yet, Madam, both are walking the world before our faces every day, without much shocking us. If you were to blush every time they went by, what complexions you would have! It is only when their naughty names are called out that your modesty has any occasion to show alarm or sense of outrage, and it has been the wish of the present writer, all through this story, deferentially to submit to the fashion at present prevailing, and only to hint at the existence of wickedness in a light, easy, and agreeable manner, so that nobody's fine feelings may be offended. I defy any one to say that our Becky, who has certainly some vices, has not been presented to the public in a perfectly genteel and inoffensive manner. In describing this siren, singing and smiling, coaxing and cajoling, the author, with modest pride, asks his readers all

round, has he once forgotten the laws of politeness, and showed the monster's hideous tail above water? No! Those who like may peep down under waves that are pretty transparent, and see it writhing and twirling, diabolically hideous and slimy, flapping amongst bones, or curling round corpses; but above the water-line, I ask, has not everything been proper, agreeable, and decorous, and has any the most squeamish immoralist in Vanity Fair a right to cry fie? When, however, the siren disappears and dives below, down among the dead men, the water of course grows turbid over her, and it is labor lost to look into it ever so curiously. They look pretty enough when they sit upon a rock, twanging their harps and combing their hair, and sing, and beckon to you to come and hold the looking-glass; but when they sink into their native element, depend on it those mermaids are about no good, and we had best not examine the fiendish marine cannibals, revelling and feasting on their wretched pickled victims. And so, when Becky is out of the way, be sure that she is not particularly well employed, and that the less that is said about her doings is in fact the better.

If we were to give a full account of her proceedings during a couple of years that followed after the Curzon Street catastrophe, there might be some reason for people to say this book was improper. The actions of very vain, heartless, pleasure-seeking people are very often improper (as are many of yours, my friend with the grave face and spotless reputation; — but that is merely by the way); and what are those of a woman without faith — or love — or character? And I am inclined to think that there was a period in Mrs. Becky's life, when she was seized, not by remorse, but by a kind of despair, and absolutely

neglected her person, and did not even care for her reputation.

This *abattement* and degradation did not take place all at once: it was brought about by degrees, after her calamity, and after many struggles to keep up — as a man who goes overboard hangs on to a spar whilst any hope is left, and then flings it away and goes down, when he finds that struggling is in vain.

She lingered about London whilst her husband was making preparations for his departure to his seat of government: and it is believed made more than one attempt to see her brother-in-law, Sir Pitt Crawley, and to work upon his feelings, which she had almost enlisted in her favor. As Sir Pitt and Mr. Wenham were walking down to the House of Commons, the latter spied Mrs. Rawdon in a black veil, and lurking near the palace of the legislature. She sneaked away when her eyes met those of Wenham, and indeed never succeeded in her designs upon the Baronet.

Probably Lady Jane interposed. I have heard that she quite astonished her husband by the spirit which she exhibited in this quarrel, and her determination to disown Mrs. Becky. Of her own movement, she invited Rawdon to come and stop in Gaunt Street until his departure for Coventry Island, knowing that with him for a guard Mrs. Becky would not try to force her door: and she looked curiously at the superscriptions of all the letters which arrived for Sir Pitt, lest he and his sister-in-law should be corresponding. Not but that Rebecca could have written had she a mind: but she did not try to see or to write to Pitt at his own house, and after one or two attempts consented to his demand that the correspondence regarding her conjugal differences should be carried on by lawyers only.

The fact was, that Pitt's mind had been poisoned against her. A short time after Lord Steyne's accident Wenham had been with the Baronet; and given him such a biography of Mrs. Becky as had astonished the member for Queen's Crawley. He knew everything regarding her: who her father was; in what year her mother danced at the Opera; what had been her previous history, and what her conduct during her married life:—as I have no doubt that the greater part of the story was false and dictated by interested malevolence, it shall not be repeated here. But Becky was left with a sad sad reputation in the esteem of a country gentleman and relative who had been once rather partial to her.

The revenues of the Governor of Coventry Island are not large. A part of them were set aside by his Excellency for the payment of certain outstanding debts and liabilities, the charges incident on his high situation required considerable expense; finally, it was found that he could not spare to his wife more than three hundred pounds a year, which he proposed to pay to her on an undertaking that she would never trouble him. Otherwise: scandal, separation, Doctors' Commons would ensue. But it was Mr. Wenham's business, Lord Steyne's business, Rawdon's, everybody's — to get her out of the country, and hush up a most disagreeable affair.

She was probably so much occupied in arranging these affairs of business with her husband's lawyers, that she forgot to take any step whatever about her son, the little Rawdon, and did not even once propose to go and see him. That young gentleman was consigned to the entire guardianship of his aunt and uncle, the former of whom had always possessed a great share of the child's affection. His mamma wrote

him a neat letter from Boulogne when she quitted England, in which she requested him to mind his book, and said she was going to take a continental tour, during which she would have the pleasure of writing to him again. But she never did for a year afterwards, and not, indeed, until Sir Pitt's only boy, always sickly, died of hooping-cough and measles; — then Rawdon's mamma wrote the most affectionate composition to her darling son, who was made heir of Queen's Crawley by this accident, and drawn more closely than ever to the kind lady, whose tender heart had already adopted him. Rawdon Crawley, then grown a tall, fine lad, blushed when he got the letter. "Oh, Aunt Jane, you are my mother!" he said; "and not — and not that one." But he wrote back a kind and respectful letter to Mrs. Rebecca, then living at a boarding-house at Florence. — But we are advancing matters.

Our darling Becky's first flight was not very far. She perched upon the French coast at Boulogne, that refuge of so much exiled English innocence; and there lived in rather a genteel, widowed manner, with a *femme de chambre* and a couple of rooms, at an hotel. She dined at the *table d'hôte*, where people thought her very pleasant, and where she entertained her neighbors by stories of her brother, Sir Pitt, and her great London acquaintance; talking that easy, fashionable slipslop, which has so much effect upon certain folks of small breeding. She passed with many of them for a person of importance; she gave little tea-parties in her private room, and shared in the innocent amusements of the place, — in sea-bathing, and in jaunts in open carriages, in strolls on the sands, and in visits to the play. Mrs. Burjoice, the printer's lady, who was boarding with her

family at the hotel for the summer, and to whom her Burjoice came of a Saturday and Sunday, voted her charming, until that little rogue of a Burjoice began to pay her too much attention. But there was nothing in the story, only that Becky was always affable, easy, and good-natured — and with men especially.

Numbers of people were going abroad as usual at the end of the season, and Becky had plenty of opportunities of finding out by the behavior of her acquaintances of the great London world the opinion of "society" as regarded her conduct. One day it was Lady Partlet and her daughters whom Becky confronted as she was walking modestly on Boulogne pier, the cliffs of Albion shining in the distance across the deep blue sea. Lady Partlet marshalled all her daughters round her with a sweep of her parasol, and retreated from the pier darting savage glances at poor little Becky who stood alone there.

On another day the packet came in. It had been blowing fresh, and it always suited Becky's humor to see the droll woe-begone faces of the people as they emerged from the boat. Lady Slingstone happened to be on board this day. Her ladyship had been exceedingly ill in her carriage, and was greatly exhausted and scarcely fit to walk up the plank from the ship to the pier. But all her energies rallied the instant she saw Becky smiling roguishly under a pink bon net: and giving her a glance of scorn, such as would have shrivelled up most women, she walked into the Custom House quite unsupported. Becky only laughed: but I don't think she liked it. She felt she was alone, quite alone: and the far-off shining cliffs of England were impassable to her.

The behavior of the men had undergone too I don't know what change. Grinstone showed his teeth and

laughed in her face with a familiarity that was not pleasant. Little Bob Suckling, who was cap in hand to her three months before, and would walk a mile in the rain to see for her carriage in the line at Gaunt House, was talking to Fitzoof of the Guards (Lord Heehaw's son) one day upon the jetty, as Becky took her walk there. Little Bobby nodded to her over his shoulder without moving his hat, and continued his conversation with the heir of Heehaw. Tom Raikes tried to walk into her sitting-room at the inn with a cigar in his mouth; but she closed the door upon him and would have locked it only that his fingers were inside. She began to feel that she was very lonely indeed. "If *he'd* been here," she said, "those cowards would never have dared to insult me." She thought about "him" with great sadness, and perhaps longing — about his honest, stupid, constant kindness and fidelity: his never-ceasing obedience; his good humor; his bravery and courage. Very likely she cried, for she was particularly lively, and had put on a little extra rouge when she came down to dinner.

She rouged regularly now: and — and her maid got Cognac for her besides that which was charged in the hotel bill.

Perhaps the insults of the men were not, however, so intolerable to her as the sympathy of certain women. Mrs. Crackenbury and Mrs. Washington White passed through Boulogne on their way to Switzerland. (The party were protected by Colonel Horner, young Beaumoris, and of course old Crackenbury, and Mrs. White's little girl.) *They* did not avoid her. They giggled, cackled, tattled, condoled, consoled, and patronized her until they drove her almost wild with rage. To be patronized by *them!* she thought, as they went away simpering after kissing her. And

she heard Beaumoris's laugh ringing on the stair, and knew quite well how to interpret his hilarity.

It was after this visit that Becky, who had paid her weekly bills, Becky who had made herself agreeable to everybody in the house, who smiled at the landlady, called the waiters "Monsieur," and paid the chambermaids in politeness and apologies, what far more than compensated for a little niggardliness in point of money (of which Becky never was free), that Becky, we say, received a notice to quit from the landlord, who had been told by some one that she was quite an unfit person to have at his hotel, where English ladies would not sit down with her. And she was forced to fly into lodgings, of which the dulness and solitude were most wearisome to her.

Still she held up, in spite of these rebuffs, and tried to make a character for herself, and conquer scandal. She went to church very regularly, and sang louder than anybody there. She took up the cause of the widows of the shipwrecked fishermen, and gave work and drawings for the Quashyboo Mission; she subscribed to the Assembly and *would n't* waltz. In a word, she did everything that was respectable, and that is why we dwell upon this part of her career with more fondness than upon subsequent parts of her history, which are not so pleasant. She saw people avoiding her, and still laboriously smiled upon them; you never could suppose from her countenance what pangs of humiliation she might be enduring inwardly.

Her history was after all a mystery. Parties were divided about her. Some people, who took the trouble to busy themselves in the matter, said that she was the criminal; whilst others vowed that she was as innocent as a lamb, and that her odious husband was in fault. She won over a good many by bursting into

tears about her boy, and exhibiting the most frantic grief when his name was mentioned, or she saw anybody like him. She gained good Mrs. Alderney's heart in that way, who was rather the Queen of British Boulogne, and gave the most dinners and balls of all the residents there, by weeping when Master Alderney came from Dr. Swishtail's academy to pass his holidays with his mother. "He and her Rawdon were of the same age, and *so* like," Becky said, in a voice choking with agony; whereas there was five years' difference between the boys' ages, and no more likeness between them than between my respected reader and his humble servant. Wenham, when he was going abroad, on his way to Kissengen to join Lord Steyne, enlightened Mrs. Alderney on this point, and told her how he was much more able to describe little Rawdon than his mamma, who notoriously hated him, and never saw him; how he was thirteen years old, while little Alderney was but nine; fair, while the other darling was dark, — in a word, caused the lady in question to repent of her good-humor.

Whenever Becky made a little circle for herself with incredible toils and labor, somebody came and swept it down rudely, and she had all her work to begin over again. It was very hard; very hard; lonely and disheartening.

There was Mrs. Newbright, who took her up for some time, attracted by the sweetness of her singing at church, and by her proper views upon serious subjects, concerning which in former days, at Queen's Crawley, Mrs. Becky had had a good deal of instruction. — Well, she not only took tracts, but she read them. She worked flannel petticoats for the Quashyboos — cotton night-caps for the Cocoanut Indians — painted hand-screens for the conversion of the Pope

and the Jews — sat under Mr. Rowls on Wednesdays, Mr. Huggleton on Thursdays, attended two Sunday services at church, besides Mr. Bawler, the Darbyite, in the evening, and all in vain. Mrs. Newbright had occasion to correspond with the Countess of Southdown about the Warmingpan Fund for the Feejee Islanders (for the management of which admirable charity both these ladies formed part of a female committee), and having mentioned her "sweet friend," Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, the Dowager Countess wrote back such a letter regarding Becky, with such particulars, hints, facts, falsehoods, and general comminations, that intimacy between Mrs. Newbright and Mrs. Crawley ceased forthwith: and all the serious world of Tours, where this misfortune took place, immediately parted company with the reprobate. Those who know the English Colonies abroad know that we carry with us our pride, pills, prejudices, Harvey-sauces, cayenne-peppers, and other Lares, making a little Britain wherever we settle down.

From one colony to another Becky fled uneasily. From Boulogne to Dieppe, from Dieppe to Caen, from Caen to Tours — trying with all her might to be respectable, and alas! always found out some day or other, and pecked out of the cage by the real daws.

Mrs. Hook Eagles took her up at one of these places: —a woman without a blemish in her character, and a house in Portman Square. She was staying at the hotel at Dieppe, whither Becky fled, and they made each other's acquaintance first at sea, where they were swimming together, and subsequently at the *table d' hôte* of the hotel. Mrs. Eagles had heard, — who indeed had not? — some of the scandal of the Steyne affair; but after a conversation with Becky, she pronounced that Mrs. Crawley was an angel, her husband a ruf-

fian, Lord Steyne an unprincipled wretch, as everybody knew, and the whole case against Mrs. Crawley, an infamous and wicked conspiracy of that rascal Wenham. "If you were a man of any spirit, Mr. Eagles, you would box the wretch's ears the next time you see him at the Club," she said to her husband. But Eagles was only a quiet old gentleman, husband to Mrs. Eagles, with a taste for geology, and not tall enough to reach anybody's ears.

The Eagles then patronized Mrs. Rawdon, took her to live with her at her own house at Paris, quarrelled with the ambassador's wife because she would not receive her *protégée;* and did all that lay in woman's power to keep Becky straight in the paths of virtue and good repute.

Becky was very respectable and orderly at first, but the life of humdrum virtue grew utterly tedious to her before long. It was the same routine every day, the same dulness and comfort, the same drive over the same stupid Bois de Boulogne, the same company of an evening, the same Blair's Sermon of a Sunday night —the same opera always being acted over and over again: Becky was dying of weariness, when, luckily for her, young Mr. Eagles came from Cambridge, and his mother, seeing the impression which her little friend made upon him, straightway gave Becky warning.

Then she tried keeping house with a female friend; then the double *ménage* began to quarrel and get into debt. Then she determined upon a boarding-house existence, and lived for some time at that famous mansion kept by Madame de Saint Amour, in the Rue Royale, at Paris, where she began exercising her graces and fascinations upon the shabby dandies and fly-blown beauties who frequented her landlady's *salons*. Becky loved society, and, indeed, could no more exist with-

out it than an opium-eater without his dram, and she was happy enough at the period of her boarding-house life. "The women here are as amusing as those in May Fair," she told an old London friend who met her — "only, their dresses are not quite so fresh. The men wear cleaned gloves, and are sad rogues, certainly, but they are not worse than Jack This and Tom That. The mistress of the house is a little vulgar, but I don't think she is so vulgar as Lady ——" and here she named the name of a great leader of fashion that I would die rather than reveal. In fact, when you saw Madame de Saint Amour's rooms lighted up of a night, men with *plaques* and *cordons* at the *écarté* tables, and the women at a little distance, you might fancy yourself for a while in good society, and that Madame was a real Countess. Many people did so fancy: and Becky was for a while one of the most dashing ladies of the Countess's *salons*.

But it is probable that her old creditors of 1815 found her out and caused her to leave Paris, for the poor little woman was forced to fly from the city rather suddenly; and went thence to Brussels.

How well she remembered the place! She grinned as she looked up at the little *entresol* which she had occupied, and thought of the Bareacres family, bawling for horses and flight, as their carriage stood in the *porte-cochère* of the hotel. She went to Waterloo and to Lacken, where George Osborne's monument much struck her. She made a little sketch of it. "That poor Cupid!" she said; "how dreadfully he was in love with me, and what a fool he was! I wonder whether little Emmy is alive. It was a good little creature: and that fat brother of hers. I have his funny fat picture still among my papers. They were kind simple people."

At Brussels Becky arrived, recommended by Madame de Saint Amour to her friend, Madame la Comtesse de Borodino, widow of Napoleon's General, the famous Count de Borodino, who was left with no resource by the deceased hero but that of a *table d' hôte* and an *écarté* table. Second-rate dandies and *roués*, widow-ladies who always have a law-suit, and very simple English folks, who fancy they see "continental society" at these houses, put down their money, or ate their meals, at Madame de Borodino's tables. The gallant young fellows treated the company round to champagne at the *table d' hôte*, rode out with the women, or hired horses on country excursions, clubbed money to take boxes at the play or the Opera, betted over the fair shoulders of the ladies at the *écarté* tables, and wrote home to their parents, in Devonshire, about their felicitous introduction to foreign society.

Here, as at Paris, Becky was a boarding-house queen: and ruled in select *pensions*. She never refused the champagne, or the bouquets, or the drives into the country, or the private boxes; but what she preferred was the *écarté* at night, — and she played audaciously. First she played only for a little, then for five-franc pieces, then for Napoleons, then for notes: then she would not be able to pay her month's *pension:* then she borrowed from the young gentlemen: then she got into cash again, and bullied Madame de Borodino, whom she had coaxed and wheedled before: then she was playing for ten sous at a time, and in a dire state of poverty: then her quarter's allowance would come in, and she would pay off Madame de Borodino's score: and would once more take the cards against Monsieur de Rossignol, or the Chevalier de Raff.

When Becky left Brussels, the sad truth is, that she

owed three months' *pension* to Madame de Borodino, of which fact, and of the gambling, and of the drinking, and of the going down on her knees to the Rev. Mr. Muff, Ministre Anglican, and borrowing money of him, and of her coaxing and flirting with Milor Noodle, son of Sir Noodle, pupil of the Rev. Mr. Muff, whom she used to take into her private room, and of whom she won large sums at *écarté* — of which fact, I say, and of a hundred of her other knaveries, the Countess de Borodino informs every English person who stops at her establishment, and announces that Madame Rawdon was no better than a *vipère*.

So our little wanderer went about setting up her tent in various cities of Europe, as restless as Ulysses or Bampfylde Moore Carew. Her taste for disrepectability grew more and more remarkable. She became a perfect Bohemian ere long, herding with people whom it would make your hair stand on end to meet.

There is no town of any mark in Europe but it has its little colony of English raffs — men whose names Mr. Hemp the officer reads out periodically at the Sheriffs' Court — young gentlemen of very good family often, only that the latter disowns them; frequenters of billiard-rooms and *estaminets*, patrons of foreign races and gaming-tables. They people the debtors' prisons — they drink and swagger — they fight and brawl — they run away without paying — they have duels with French and German officers — they cheat Mr. Spooney at *écarté* — they get the money, and drive off to Baden in magnificent britzkas — they try their infallible martingale, and lurk about the tables with empty pockets, shabby bullies, penniless bucks, until they can swindle a Jew banker with a sham bill of exchange, or find another Mr. Spooney to rob.

The alternations of splendor and misery which these people undergo are very queer to view. Their life must be one of great excitement. Becky — must it be owned? — took to this life, and took to it not unkindly. She went about from town to town among these Bohemians. The lucky Mrs. Rawdon was known at every play-table in Germany. She and Madame de Cruchecassée kept house at Florence together. It is said she was ordered out of Munich; and my friend Mr. Frederick Pigeon avers that it was at her house at Lausanne that he was hocussed at supper and lost eight hundred pounds to Major Loder and the Hon. Mr. Deuceace. We are bound, you see, to give some account of Becky's biography; but of this part, the less, perhaps, that is said the better.

They say, that when Mrs. Crawley was particularly down on her luck, she gave concerts and lessons in music here and there. There was a Madame de Raudon, who certainly had a *matinée musicale* at Wildbad, accompanied by Herr Spoff, premier pianist to the Hospodar of Wallachia, and my little friend Mr. Eaves, who knew everybody, and had travelled everywhere, always used to declare that he was at Strasburg in the year 1830, when a certain Madame Rebecque made her appearance in the opera of the "Dame Blanche," giving occasion to a furious row in the theatre there. She was hissed off the stage by the audience, partly from her own incompetency, but chiefly from the ill-advised sympathy of some persons in the *parquet*, (where the officers of the garrison had their admissions); and Eaves was certain that the unfortunate *débutante* in question was no other than Mrs. Rawdon Crawley.

She was, in fact, no better than a vagabond upon this earth. When she got her money she gambled;

when she had gambled it she was put to shifts to live; who knows how or by what means she succeeded? It is said that she was once seen at St. Petersburg, but was summarily dismissed from that capital by the police, so that there cannot be any possibility of truth in the report that she was a Russian spy at Töplitz and Vienna afterwards. I have even been informed, that at Paris she discovered a relation of her own, no less a person than her maternal grandmother, who was not by any means a Montmorency, but a hideous old box-opener at a theatre on the Boulevards. The meeting between them, of which other persons, as it is hinted elsewhere, seem to have been acquainted, must have been a very affecting interview. The present historian can give no certain details regarding the event.

It happened at Rome once, that Mrs. de Raudon's half-year's salary had just been paid into the principal bankers there, and, as everybody who had a balance of above five hundred scudi was invited to the balls which this prince of merchants gave during the winter, Becky had the honor of a card, and appeared at one of the Prince and Princess Polonia's splendid evening entertainments. The Princess was of the family of Pompili, lineally descended from the second king of Rome, and Egeria of the house of Olympus, while the Prince's grandfather, Alessandro Polonia, sold wash-balls, essences, tobacco, and pocket-handkerchiefs, ran errands for gentlemen, and lent money in a small way. All the great company in Rome thronged to his saloons — Princes, Dukes, Ambassadors, artists, fiddlers, monsignori, young bears with their leaders — every rank and condition of man. His halls blazed with light and magnificence: were resplendent with gilt frames (containing pictures),

and dubious antiques: and the enormous gilt crown and arms of the princely owner, a gold mushroom on a crimson field (the color of the pocket-handkerchiefs which he sold), and the silver fountain of the Pompili family shone all over the roof, doors, and panels of the house, and over the grand velvet baldaquins prepared to receive Popes and Emperors.

So Becky, who had arrived in the diligence from Florence, and was lodged at an inn in a very modest way, got a card for Prince Polonia's entertainment, and her maid dressed her with unusual care, and she went to this fine ball leaning on the arm of Major Loder, with whom she happened to be travelling at the time — (the same man who shot Prince Ravoli at Naples the next year, and was caned by Sir John Buckskin for carrying four kings in his hat beside those which he used in playing at *écarté*) — and this pair went into the rooms together, and Becky saw a number of old faces which she remembered in happier days, when she was not innocent, but not found out. Major Loder knew a great number of foreigners, keen-looking whiskered men with dirty striped ribbons in their button-holes, and a very small display of linen; but his own countrymen, it might be remarked, eschewed the Major. Becky, too, knew some ladies here and there — French widows, dubious Italian countesses, whose husbands had treated them ill — faugh — what shall we say, we who have moved among some of the finest company of Vanity Fair, of this refuse and sediment of rascals? If we play, let it be with clean cards, and not with this dirty pack. But every man who has formed one of the innumerable army of travellers has seen these marauding irregulars hanging on, like Nym and Pistol, to the main force; wearing the king's colors, and

boasting of his commission, but pillaging for themselves, and occasionally gibbeted by the roadside.

Well, she was hanging on the arm of Major Loder, and they went through the rooms together, and drank a great quantity of champagne at the buffet, where the people, and especially the Major's irregular corps, struggled furiously for refreshments, of which when the pair had had enough, they pushed on until they reached the Duchess's own pink velvet saloon, at the end of the suite of apartments (where the statue of the Venus is, and the great Venice looking-glasses, framed in silver), and where the princely family were entertaining their most distinguished guests at a round table at supper. It was just such a little select banquet as that of which Becky recollected that she had partaken at Lord Steyne's — and there he sat at Polonia's table, and she saw him.

The scar cut by the diamond on his white, bald, shining forehead, made a burning red mark; his red whiskers were dyed of a purple hue, which made his pale face look still paler. He wore his collar and orders, his blue ribbon and garter. He was a greater prince than any there, though there was a reigning duke and a royal highness, with their princesses, and near his lordship was seated the beautiful Countess of Belladonna, *née* de Glandier, whose husband (the Count Paolo della Belladonna) so well known for his brilliant entomological collections, had been long absent on a mission to the Emperor of Morocco.

When Becky beheld that familiar and illustrious face, how vulgar all of a sudden did Major Loder appear to her, and how that odious Captain Rook did smell of tobacco! In one instant she reassumed her fine-ladyship, and tried to look and feel as if she was

in May Fair once more. "That woman looks stupid and ill-humored," she thought; "I am sure she can't amuse him. No, he must be bored by her — he never was by me." A hundred such touching hopes, fears, and memories palpitated in her little heart, as she looked with her brightest eyes (the rouge which she wore up to her eyelids made them twinkle) towards the great nobleman. Of a Star and Garter night Lord Steyne used also to put on his grandest manner, and to look and speak like a great prince, as he was. Becky admired him smiling sumptuously, easy, lofty, and stately. Ah, *bon dieu*, what a pleasant companion he was, what a brilliant wit, what a rich fund of talk, what a grand manner! — and she had exchanged this for Major Loder, reeking of cigars and brandy-and-water, and Captain Rook with his horse-jockey jokes and prize-ring slang, and their like. "I wonder whether he will know me," she thought. Lord Steyne was talking and laughing with a great and illustrious lady at his side, when he looked up and saw Becky.

She was all over in a flutter as their eyes met, and she put on the very best smile she could muster, and dropped him a little, timid, imploring curtsy. He stared aghast at her for a minute, as Macbeth might on beholding Banquo's sudden appearance at his ball-supper; and remained looking at her with open mouth, when that horrid Major Loder pulled her away.

"Come away into the supper-room, Mrs. R.," was that gentleman's remark: "seeing these nobs grubbing away has made me peckish too. Let's go and try the old governor's champagne." Becky thought the Major had had a great deal too much already.

The day after she went to walk on the Pincian

Hill — the Hyde Park of the Roman idlers — possibly in hopes to have another sight of Lord Steyne. But she met another acquaintance there: it was Mr. Fiche, his lordship's confidential man, who came up nodding to her rather familiarly, and putting a finger to his hat. "I knew that Madame was here," he said; "I followed her from her hotel. I have some advice to give Madame."

"From the Marquis of Steyne?" Becky asked, resuming as much of her dignity as she could muster, and not a little agitated by hope and expectation.

"No," said the valet; "it is from me. Rome is very unwholesome."

"Not at this season, Monsieur Fiche, — not till after Easter."

"I tell Madame it is unwholesome now. There is always malaria for some people. That cursed marsh wind kills many at all seasons. Look, Madame Crawley, you were always *bon enfant*, and I have an interest in you, *parole d'honneur*. Be warned. Go away from Rome, I tell you — or you will be ill and die."

Becky laughed, though in rage and fury. "What! assassinate poor little me?" she said. "How romantic. Does my lord carry bravos for couriers, and stilettos in the *fourgons?* Bah! I will stay, if but to plague him. I have those who will defend me whilst I am here."

It was Monsieur Fiche's turn to laugh now. "Defend you," he said, "and who? The Major, the Captain, any one of those gambling men whom Madame sees, would take her life for a hundred Louis. We know things about Major Loder (he is no more a Major than I am my Lord the Marquis) which would send him to the galleys or worse. We know everything, and have friends everywhere. We know whom

you saw at Paris, and what relations you found there. Yes, Madame may stare but we do. How was it that no minister on the Continent would receive Madame? She has offended somebody: who never forgives — whose rage redoubled when he saw you. He was like a madman last night when he came home. Madame de Belladonna made him a scene about you, and fired off in one of her furies."

"Oh, it was Madame de Belladonna, was it?" Becky said, relieved a little, for the information she had just got had scared her.

"No — she does not matter — she is always jealous. I tell you it was Monseigneur. You did wrong to show yourself to him. And if you stay here you will repent it. Mark my words. Go. Here is my lord's carriage" — and seizing Becky's arm, he rushed down an alley of the garden as Lord Steyne's barouche, blazing with heraldic devices, came whirling along the avenue, borne by the almost priceless horses, and bearing Madame de Belladonna lolling on the cushions, dark, sulky, and blooming, a King Charles in her lap, a white parasol swaying over her head, and old Steyne stretched at her side with a livid face and ghastly eyes. Hate, or anger, or desire, caused them to brighten now and then still; but ordinarily, they gave no light, and seemed tired of looking out on a world of which almost all the pleasure and all the best beauty had palled upon the worn-out wicked old man.

"Monseigneur has never recovered the shock of that night, never," Monsieur Fiche whispered to Mrs. Crawley as the carriage flashed by, and she peeped out at it from behind the shrubs that hid her. "That was a consolation at any rate," Becky thought.

Whether my lord really had murderous intentions

towards Mrs. Becky as Monsieur Fiche said — (since Monseigneur's death he has returned to his native country, where he lives much respected and has purchased from his Prince the title of Baron Ficci), — and the factotum objected to have to do with assassination; or whether he simply had a commission to frighten Mrs. Crawley out of a city where his lordship proposed to pass the winter, and the sight of her would be eminently disagreeable to the great nobleman, is a point which has never been ascertained: but the threat had its effect upon the little woman, and she sought no more to intrude herself upon the presence of her old patron.

Everybody knows the melancholy end of that nobleman, which befell at Naples two months after the French Revolution of 1830: when the Most Honorable George Gustavus, Marquis of Steyne, Earl of Gaunt and of Gaunt Castle, in the Peerage of Ireland, Viscount Hellborough, Baron Pitchley and Grillsby, a Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, of the Golden Fleece of Spain, of the Russian Order of Saint Nicholas of the First Class, of the Turkish Order of the Crescent, First Lord of the Powder Closet and Groom of the Back Stairs, Colonel of the Gaunt or Regent's Own Regiment of Militia, a Trustee of the British Museum, an elder Brother of the Trinity House, a Governor of the White Friars and D.C.L., — died after a series of fits, brought on, as the papers said, by the shock occasioned to his lordship's sensibilities by the downfall of the ancient French monarchy.

An eloquent catalogue appeared in a weekly print, describing his virtues, his magnificence, his talents, and his good actions. His sensibility, his attachment to the illustrious House of Bourbon, with which he

claimed an alliance, were such that he could not survive the misfortunes of his august kinsmen. His body was buried at Naples, and his heart — that heart which always beat with every generous and noble emotion — was brought back to Castle Gaunt in a silver urn. "In him," Mr. Wagg said, "the poor and the Fine Arts have lost a beneficent patron, society one of its most brilliant ornaments, and England one of her loftiest patriots and statesmen," etc., etc.

His will was a good deal disputed, and an attempt was made to force from Madame de Belladonna the celebrated jewel called the "Jew's-eye" diamond, which his lordship always wore on his forefinger, and which it was said that she removed from it after his lamented demise. But his confidential friend and attendant, Monsieur Fiche, proved that the ring had been presented to the said Madame de Belladonna two days before the Marquis's death; as were the bank-notes, jewels, Neapolitan and French bonds, etc., found in his lordship's secretaire, and claimed by his heirs from that injured woman.

CHAPTER XI.

FULL OF BUSINESS AND PLEASURE.

THE day after the meeting at the play-table, Jos had himself arrayed with unusual care and splendor, and without thinking it necessary to say a word to any member of his family regarding the occurrences of the previous night, or asking for their company in his walk, he sallied forth at an early hour, and was presently seen making inquiries at the door of the Elephant Hotel. In consequence of the fêtes the house was full of company, the tables in the street were already surrounded by persons smoking and drinking the national small-beer, the public rooms were in a cloud of smoke, and Mr. Jos having, in his pompous way, and with his clumsy German, made inquiries for the person of whom he was in search, was directed to the very top of the house, above the first-floor rooms where some travelling peddlers had lived, and were exhibiting their jewelry and brocades; above the second-floor apartments occupied by the *état major* of the gambling firm; above the third-floor rooms, tenanted by the band of renowned Bohemian vaulters and tumblers; and so on to the little cabins of the roof, where, among students, bagmen, small tradesmen, and country-folks, come in for the festival, Becky had found a little nest;—as dirty a little refuge as ever beauty lay hid in.

Becky liked the life. She was at home with everybody in the place, peddlers, punters, tumblers, students,

and all. She was of a wild, roving nature, inherited from father and mother, who were both Bohemians, by taste and circumstance; if a lord was not by, she would talk to his courier with the greatest pleasure; the din, the stir, the drink, the smoke, the tattle of the Hebrew peddlers, the solemn, braggart ways of the poor tumblers, the *sournois* talk of the gambling-table officials, the songs and swagger of the students, and the general buzz and hum of the place had pleased and tickled the little woman, even when her luck was down, and she had not wherewithal to pay her bill. How pleasant was all the bustle to her now that her purse was full of the money which little Georgy had won for her the night before.

As Jos came creaking and puffing up the final stairs, and was speechless when he got to the landing, and began to wipe his face and then to look for No. 92, the room where he was directed to seek for the person he wanted, the door of the opposite chamber, No. 90, was opened, and a student, in jack-boots and a dirty *schlafrock*, was lying on the bed smoking a long pipe; whilst another student in long yellow hair and a braided coat, exceeding smart and dirty too, was actually on his knees at No. 92, bawling through the keyhole supplications to the person within.

"Go away," said a well-known voice, which made Jos thrill, "I expect somebody; I expect my grandpapa. He must n't see you there."

"Angel *Engländerinn!*" bellowed the kneeling student with the whity-brown ringlets and the large finger-ring, "do take compassion upon us. Make an appointment. Dine with me and Fritz at the inn in the park. We will have roast pheasants and porter, plum-pudding and French wine. We shall die if you don't."

"That we will," said the young nobleman on the bed; and this colloquy Jos overheard, though he did not comprehend it, for the reason that he had never studied the language in which it was carried on.

"*Newmero kattervang dooze, si vous plait,*" Jos said in his grandest manner, when he was able to speak.

"*Quater fang tooce!*" said the student, starting up, and he bounced into his own room, where he locked the door, and where Jos heard him laughing with his comrade on the bed.

The gentleman from Bengal was standing disconcerted by this incident, when the door of the 92 opened of itself, and Becky's little head peeped out full of archness and mischief. She lighted on Jos. "It's you," she said, coming out. "How I have been waiting for you! Stop! not yet — in one minute you shall come in." In that instant she put a rouge-pot, a brandy-bottle, and a plate of broken meat into the bed, gave one smooth to her hair, and finally let in her visitor.

She had, by way of morning robe, a pink domino, a trifle faded and soiled, and marked here and there with pomatum; but her arms shone out from the loose sleeves of the dress very white and fair, and it was tied round her little waist, so as not ill to set off the trim little figure of the wearer. She led Jos by the hand into her garret. "Come in," she said. "Come, and talk to me. Sit yonder on the chair;" and she gave the civilian's hand a little squeeze, and laughingly placed him upon it. As for herself, she placed herself on the bed — not on the bottle and plate, you may be sure — on which Jos might have reposed had he chosen that seat: and so there she sat and talked with her old admirer.

"How little years have changed you," she said, with a look of tender interest. "I should have known you anywhere. What a comfort it is amongst strangers to see once more the frank honest face of an old friend!"

The frank honest face, to tell the truth, at this moment bore any expression but one of openness and honesty: it was, on the contrary, much perturbed and puzzled in look. Jos was surveying the queer little apartment in which he found his old flame. One of her gowns hung over the bed, another depending from a hook of the door: her bonnet obscured half the looking-glass, on which, too, lay the prettiest little pair of bronze boots; a French novel was on the table by the bedside, with a candle, not of wax. Becky thought of popping that into the bed too, but she only put in the little paper night-cap with which she had put the candle out on going to sleep.

"I should have known you anywhere," she continued; "a woman never forgets some things. And you were the first man I ever — I ever saw."

"Was I, really?" said Jos. "God bless my soul, you — you don't say so."

"When I came with your sister from Chiswick, I was scarcely more than a child," Becky said. "How is that dear love? Oh, her husband was a sad wicked man, and of course it was of me that the poor dear was jealous. As if I cared about him, heigho! when there was somebody — but no — don't let us talk of old times;" and she passed her handkerchief with the tattered lace across her eyelids.

"Is not this a strange place," she continued, "for a woman, who has lived in a very different world too,

to be found in? I have had so many griefs and wrongs, Joseph Sedley, I have been made to suffer so cruelly, that I am almost made mad sometimes. I can't stay still in any place, but wander about always restless and unhappy. All my friends have been false to me — all. There is no such thing as an honest man in the world. I was the truest wife that ever lived, though I married my husband out of pique, because somebody else — but never mind that. I was true, and he trampled upon me, and deserted me. I was the fondest mother. I had but one child, one darling, one hope, one joy, which I held to my heart with a mother's affection, which was my life, my prayer, my — my blessing; and they — they tore it from me — tore it from me;" and she put her hand to her heart with a passionate gesture of despair, burying her face for a moment on the bed.

The brandy-bottle inside clinked up against the plate which held the cold sausage. Both were moved, no doubt, by the exhibition of so much grief. Max and Fritz were at the door listening with wonder to Mrs. Becky's sobs and cries. Jos, too, was a good deal frightened and affected at seeing his old flame in this condition. And she began, forthwith, to tell her story, — a tale so neat, simple, and artless, that it was quite evident from hearing her, that if ever there was a white-robed angel escaped from heaven to be subject to the infernal machinations and villany of fiends here below, that spotless being — that miserable unsullied martyr was present on the bed before Jos — on the bed, sitting on the brandy-bottle.

They had a very long, amicable, and confidential talk there; in the course of which, Jos Sedley was somehow made aware (but in a manner that did not

in the least scare or offend him) that Becky's heart had first learned to beat at his enchanting presence: that George Osborne had certainly paid an unjustifiable court to *her*, which might account for Amelia's jealousy, and their little rupture; but that Becky never gave the least encouragement to the unfortunate officer, and that she had never ceased to think about Jos from the very first day she had seen him, though, of course, her duties as a married woman were paramount — duties which she had always preserved, and would, to her dying day, or until the proverbially bad climate in which Colonel Crawley was living, should release her from a yoke which his cruelty had rendered odious to her.

Jos went away, convinced that she was the most virtuous, as she was one of the most fascinating of women, and revolving in his mind all sorts of benevolent schemes for her welfare. Her persecutions ought to be ended; she ought to return to the society of which she was an ornament. He would see what ought to be done. She must quit that place, and take a quiet lodging. Amelia must come and see her, and befriend her. He would go and settle about it, and consult with the Major. She wept tears of heartfelt gratitude as she parted from him, and pressed his hand as the gallant stout gentleman stooped down to kiss hers.

So Becky bowed Jos out of her little garret with as much grace as if it was a palace of which she did the honors; and that heavy gentleman having disappeared down the stairs, Hans and Fritz came out of their hole, pipe in mouth, and she amused herself by mimicking Jos to them as she munched her cold bread and sausage and took draughts of her favorite brandy-and-water.

Jos walked over to Dobbin's lodgings with great solemnity, and there imparted to him the affecting history with which he had just been made acquainted, without, however, mentioning the play-business of the night before. And the two gentlemen were laying their heads together, and consulting as to the best means of being useful to Mrs. Becky, while she was finishing her interrupted *déjeuner à la fourchette*.

How was it she had come to that little town? How was it that she had no friends and was wandering about alone? Little boys at school are taught in their earliest Latin book, that the path of Avernus is very easy of descent. Let us skip over the interval in the history of her downward progress. She was not worse now than she had been in the days of her prosperity: — only a little down on her luck.

As for Mrs. Amelia, she was a woman of such a soft and foolish disposition, that when she heard of anybody unhappy, her heart straightway melted towards the sufferer; and as she had never thought or done anything mortally guilty herself, she had not that abhorrence for wickedness which distinguishes moralists much more knowing. If she spoiled everybody who came near her with kindness and compliments, — if she begged pardon of all her servants for troubling them to answer the bell, — if she apologized to a shop-boy who showed her a piece of silk, or made a curtsy to a street-sweeper, with a complimentary remark upon the elegant state of his crossing — and she was almost capable of every one of these follies — the notion that an old acquaintance was miserable was sure to soften her heart; nor would she hear of anybody's being deservedly unhappy. A world under such legislation as hers would not be a very orderly place of abode; but there are not many women, at

least not of the rulers, who are of her sort. This lady, I believe, would have abolished all gaols, punishments, handcuffs, whippings, poverty, sickness, hunger, in the world; and was such a mean-spirited creature, that — we are obliged to confess it — she could even forget a mortal injury.

When the Major heard from Jos of the sentimental adventure which had just befallen the latter, he was not, it must be owned, nearly as much interested as the gentleman from Bengal. On the contrary, his excitement was quite the reverse from a pleasurable one; he made use of a brief but improper expression regarding a poor woman in distress, saying, in fact, — "the little minx, has she come to light again?" He never had had the slightest liking for her; but had heartily mistrusted her from the very first moment when her green eyes had looked at, and turned away from, his own.

"That little devil brings mischief wherever she goes," the Major said, disrespectfully. "Who knows what sort of life she has been leading? and what business has she here abroad and alone? Don't tell me about persecutors and enemies; an honest woman always has friends, and never is separated from her family. Why has she left her husband? He may have been disreputable and wicked, as you say. He always was. I remember the confounded blackleg, and the way in which he used to cheat and hoodwink poor George. Was n't there a scandal about their separation? I think I heard something," cried out Major Dobbin, who did not care much about gossip; and whom Jos tried in vain to convince that Mrs. Becky was in all respects a most injured and virtuous female.

"Well, well; let 's ask Mrs. George," said that arch-

diplomatist of a Major. "Only let us go and consult *her*. I suppose you will allow that *she* is a good judge at any rate, and knows what is right in such matters."

"Hm! Emmy is very well," said Jos, who did not happen to be in love with his sister.

"Very well? by Gad, sir, she's the finest lady I ever met in my life," bounced out the Major. "I say at once, let us go and ask her if this woman ought to be visited or not — I will be content with her verdict." Now this odious, artful rogue of a Major was thinking in his own mind that he was sure of his case. Emmy, he remembered, was at one time cruelly and deservedly jealous of Rebecca, never mentioned her name but with a shrinking and terror — a jealous woman never forgives, thought Dobbin; and so the pair went across the street to Mrs. George's house, where she was contentedly warbling at a music-lesson with Madame Strumpff.

When that lady took her leave, Jos opened the business with his usual pomp of words. "Amelia, my dear," said he, "I have just had the most extraordinary — yes — God bless my soul! the most extraordinary adventure — an old friend — yes, a most interesting old friend of yours, and I may say in old times, has just arrived here, and I should like you to see her."

"Her!" said Amelia, "who is it? Major Dobbin, if you please not to break my scissors." The Major was twirling them round by the little chain from which they sometimes hung to their lady's waist, and was thereby endangering his own eye.

"It is a woman whom I dislike very much," said the Major, doggedly; "and whom you have no cause to love."

"It is Rebecca, I'm sure it is Rebecca," Amelia said blushing, and being very much agitated.

"You are right; you always are," Dobbin answered. Brussels, Waterloo, old, old times, griefs, pangs, remembrances, rushed back into Amelia's gentle heart, and caused a cruel agitation there.

"Don't let me see her," Emmy continued. "I could n't see her."

"I told you so," Dobbin said to Jos.

"She is very unhappy, and — and that sort of thing," Jos urged. "She is very poor and unprotected: and has been ill — exceedingly ill — and that scoundrel of a husband has deserted her."

"Ah!" said Amelia.

"She has n't a friend in the world," Jos went on, not undexterously; "and she said she thought she might trust in you. She 's so miserable, Emmy. She has been almost mad with grief. Her story quite affected me: — 'pon my word and honor, it did — never was such a cruel persecution borne so angelically, I may say. Her family has been most cruel to her."

"Poor creature!" Amelia said.

"And if she can get no friend, she says she thinks she 'll die," Jos proceeded, in a low tremulous voice. — "God bless my soul! do you know that she tried to kill herself? She carries laudanum with her — I saw the bottle in her room — such a miserable little room — at a third-rate house, the Elephant, up in the roof at the top of all. I went there."

This did not seem to affect Emmy. She even smiled a little. Perhaps she figured Jos to herself panting up the stair.

"She 's beside herself with grief," he resumed. "The agonies that woman has endured are quite

frightful to hear of. She had a little boy, of the same age as Georgy."

"Yes, yes, I think I remember," Emmy remarked. "Well?"

"The most beautiful child ever seen," Jos said, who was very fat, and easily moved, and had been touched by the story Becky told; "a perfect angel, who adored his mother. The ruffians tore him shrieking out of her arms, and have never allowed him to see her."

"Dear Joseph," Emmy cried out, starting up at once, "let us go and see her this minute." And she ran into her adjoining bedchamber, tied on her bonnet in a flutter, came out with her shawl on her arm, and ordered Dobbin to follow.

He went and put her shawl — it was a white cashmere, consigned to her by the Major himself from India — over her shoulders. He saw there was nothing for it but to obey; and she put her hand into his arm, and they went away.

"It is number 92, up four pair of stairs," Jos said perhaps not very willing to ascend the steps again; but he placed himself in the window of his drawing-room, which commands the place on which the Elephant stands, and saw the pair marching through the market.

It was as well that Becky saw them too from her garret; for she and the two students were chattering and laughing there; they had been joking about the appearance of Becky's grandpapa — whose arrival and departure they had witnessed — but she had time to dismiss them, and have her little room clear before the landlord of the Elephant, who knew that Mrs. Osborne was a great favorite at the Serene Court, and respected her accordingly, led the way up the stairs

to the roof-story, encouraging Miladi and the Herr Major as they achieved the ascent.

"Gracious lady, gracious lady!" said the landlord, knocking at Becky's door; he had called her Madame the day before, and was by no means courteous to her.

"Who is it?" Becky said, putting out her head, and she gave a little scream. There stood Emmy in a tremble, and Dobbin, the tall Major, with his cane.

He stood still watching, and very much interested at the scene; but Emmy sprang forward with open arms towards Rebecca, and forgave her at that moment, and embraced her and kissed her with all her heart. Ah, poor wretch, when was your lip pressed before by such pure kisses?

CHAPTER XII.

AMANTIUM IRÆ.

Frankness and kindness like Amelia's were likely to touch even such a hardened little reprobate as Becky. She returned Emmy's caresses and kind speeches with something very like gratitude, and an emotion which, if it was not lasting, for a moment was almost genuine. That was a lucky stroke of hers about the child "torn from her arms shrieking." It was by that harrowing misfortune that Becky had won her friend back, and it was one of the very first points, we may be certain, upon which our poor simple little Emmy began to talk to her new-found acquaintance.

"And so they took your darling child from you," our simpleton cried out. "Oh, Rebecca, my poor dear suffering friend, I know what it is to lose a boy, and to feel for those who have lost one. But please Heaven yours will be restored to you, as a merciful merciful Providence has brought me back mine."

"The child, my child? Oh, yes, my agonies were frightful," Becky owned, not perhaps without a twinge of conscience. It jarred upon her, to be obliged to commence instantly to tell lies in reply to so much confidence and simplicity. But that is the misfortune of beginning with this kind of forgery. When one fib becomes due as it were, you must forge another to take up the old acceptance; and so the

stock of your lies in circulation inevitably multiplies, and the danger of detection increases every day.

"My agonies," Becky continued, "were terrible (I hope she won't sit down on the bottle) when they took him away from me; I thought I should die; but I fortunately had a brain fever, during which my doctor gave me up, and — and I recovered, and — and here I am, poor and friendless."

"How old is he?" Emmy asked.

"Eleven," said Becky.

"Eleven!" cried the other. "Why, he was born the same year with Georgy, who is —"

"I know, I know," Becky cried out, who had in fact quite forgotten all about little Rawdon's age. "Grief has made me forget so many things, dearest Amelia. I am very much changed; half wild sometimes. He was eleven when they took him away from me. Bless his sweet face; I have never seen it again."

"Was he fair or dark?" went on that absurd little Emmy. "Show me his hair."

Becky almost laughed at her simplicity. "Not to-day, love, — some other time, when my trunks arrive from Leipzig, whence I came to this place, — and a little drawing of him, which I made in happy days."

"Poor Becky, poor Becky!" said Emmy. "How thankful, how thankful I ought to be!" (though I doubt whether that practice of piety inculcated upon us by our womankind in early youth, namely, to be thankful because we are better off than somebody else, be a very rational religious exercise); and then she began to think as usual, how her son was the handsomest, the best, and the cleverest boy in the whole world.

"You will see my Georgy," was the best thing Emmy could think of to console Becky. If anything could make her comfortable that would.

And so the two women continued talking for an hour or more, during which Becky had the opportunity of giving her new friend a full and complete version of her private history. She showed how her marriage with Rawdon Crawley had always been viewed by the family with feelings of the utmost hostility; how her sister-in-law (an artful woman) had poisoned her husband's mind against her; how he had formed odious connections, which had estranged his affections from her; how she had borne everything — poverty, neglect, coldness from the being whom she most loved — and all for the sake of her child; how, finally, and by the most flagrant outrage, she had been driven into demanding a separation from her husband, when the wretch did not scruple to ask that she should sacrifice her own fair fame so that he might procure advancement through the means of a very great and powerful but unprincipled man — the Marquis of Steyne, indeed. The atrocious monster!

This part of her eventful history Becky gave with the utmost feminine delicacy, and the most indignant virtue. Forced to fly her husband's roof by this insult, the coward had pursued his revenge by taking her child from her. And thus Becky said she was a wanderer, poor, unprotected, friendless, and wretched.

Emmy received this story, which was told at some length, as those persons who are acquainted with her character may imagine that she would. She quivered with indignation at the account of the conduct of the miserable Rawdon and the unprincipled Steyne. Her

eyes made notes of admiration for every one of the sentences in which Becky described the persecutions of her aristocratic relatives, and the falling away of her husband. (Becky did not abuse him. She spoke rather in sorrow than in anger. She had loved him only too fondly: and was he not the father of her boy?) And as for the separation-scene from the child, while Becky was reciting it, Emmy retired altogether behind her pocket-handkerchief, so that the consummate little tragedian must have been charmed to see the effect which her performance produced on her audience.

Whilst the ladies were carrying on their conversation, Amelia's constant escort, the Major (who, of course, did not wish to interrupt their conference, and found himself rather tired of creaking about the narrow stair passage of which the roof brushed the nap from his hat), descended to the ground-floor of the house and into the great room common to all the frequenters of the Elephant, out of which the stair led. This apartment is always in a fume of smoke, and liberally sprinkled with beer. On a dirty table stand scores of corresponding brass-candlesticks with tallow candles for the lodgers, whose keys hang up in rows over the candles. Emmy had passed blushing through the room anon, where all sorts of people were collected; Tyrolese glove-sellers and Danubian linen-merchants, with their packs; students recruiting themselves with *butterbrods* and meat; idlers, playing cards or dominos on the sloppy, beery tables; tumblers refreshing during the cessation of their performances; — in a word, all the *fumum* and *strepitus* of a German inn in fair time. The waiter brought the Major a mug of beer, as a matter of course; and he took out a cigar, and amused himself with that

pernicious vegetable and a newspaper until his charge should come down to claim him.

Max and Fritz came presently down stairs, their caps on one side, their spurs jingling, their pipes splendid with coats-of-arms and full-blown tassels, and they hung up the key of No. 90 on the board, and called for the ration of *butterbrod* and beer. The pair sat down by the Major, and fell into a conversation of which he could not help hearing somewhat. It was mainly about "Fuchs" and "Philister," and duels and drinking-bouts at the neighboring University of Schoppenhausen, from which renowned seat of learning they had just come in the *Eilwagen*, with Becky, as it appeared, by their side, and in order to be present at the bridal fêtes at Pumpernickel.

"The little *Engländerinn* seems to be *en bayse de gonnoisance*," said Max, who knew the French language, to Fritz, his comrade. "After the fat grandfather went away, there came a pretty little compatriot. I heard them chattering and whimpering together in the little woman's chamber."

"We must take the tickets for her concert," Fritz said. "Hast thou any money, Max?"

"Bah," said the other, "the concert is a concert *in nubibus*. Hans said that she advertised one at Leipzig: and the Burschen took many tickets. But she went off without singing. She said in the coach yesterday that her pianist had fallen ill at Dresden. She cannot sing, it is my belief: her voice is as cracked as thine, O thou beer-soaking Renowner!"

"It is cracked; *I* hear her trying out of her window a *schrecklich* English ballad, called 'De Rose upon de Balgony.'"

"*Saufen* and *singen* go not together," observed Fritz with the red nose, who evidently preferred the

former amusement. "No, thou shalt take none of her tickets. She won money at the *trente* and *quarante* last night. I saw her: she made a little English boy play for her. We will spend thy money there or at the theatre, or we will treat her to French wine or cognac in the Aurelius Garden, but the tickets we will not buy. What sayest thou? Yet, another mug of beer?" and one and another successively having buried their blond whiskers in the mawkish draught, curled them and swaggered off into the fair.

The Major, who had seen the key of No. 90 put up on its hook, and had heard the conversation of the two young university bloods, was not at a loss to understand that their talk related to Becky. "The little devil is at her old tricks," he thought, and he smiled as he recalled old days, when he had witnessed the desperate flirtation with Jos, and the ludicrous end of that adventure. He and George had often laughed over it subsequently, and until a few weeks after George's marriage, when he also was caught in the little Circe's toils, and had an understanding with her which his comrade certainly suspected, but preferred to ignore. William was too much hurt or ashamed to ask to fathom that disgraceful mystery, although once, and evidently with remorse on his mind, George had alluded to it. It was on the morning of Waterloo, as the young men stood together in front of their line, surveying the black masses of Frenchmen who crowned the opposite heights, and as the rain was coming down, "I have been mixing in a foolish intrigue with a woman," George said. "I am glad we were marched away. If I drop, I hope Emmy will never know of that business. I wish to God it had never been begun!" And William was pleased to think, and had more than once soothed poor George's

widow with the narrative, that Osborne, after quitting his wife, and after the action of Quatre Bras, on the first day, spoke gravely and affectionately to his comrade of his father and his wife. On these facts, too, William had insisted very strongly in his conversations with the elder Osborne: and had thus been the means of reconciling the old gentleman to his son's memory, just at the close of the elder man's life.

"And so this devil is still going on with her intrigues," thought William. "I wish she were a hundred miles from here. She brings mischief wherever she goes." And he was pursuing these forebodings and this uncomfortable train of thought, with his head between his hands, and the "Pumpernickel Gazette" of last week unread under his nose, when somebody tapped his shoulder with a parasol, and he looked up and saw Mrs. Amelia.

This woman had a way of tyrannizing over Major Dobbin (for the weakest of all people will domineer over somebody), and she ordered him about, and patted him, and made him fetch and carry just as if he was a great Newfoundland dog. He liked, so to speak, to jump into the water if she said "High, Dobbin!" and to trot behind her with her reticule in his mouth. This history has been written to very little purpose if the reader has not perceived that the Major was a spooney.

"Why did you not wait for me, sir, to escort me down stairs?" she said, giving a little toss of her head, and a most sarcastic curtsy.

"I could n't stand up in the passage," he answered, with a comical deprecatory look; and, delighted to give her his arm, and to take her out of the horrid smoky place, he would have walked off without even so much as remembering the waiter, had not the young

fellow run after him and stopped him on the threshold of the Elephant, to make him pay for the beer which he had not consumed. Emmy laughed: she called him a naughty man, who wanted to run away in debt: and, in fact, made some jokes suitable to the occasion and the small-beer. She was in high spirits and good humor, and tripped across the market-place very briskly. She wanted to see Jos that instant. The Major laughed at the impetuous affection Mrs. Amelia exhibited; for, in truth, it was not very often that she wanted her brother "that instant."

They found the civilian in his saloon on the first floor; he had been pacing the room, and biting his nails, and looking over the market-place towards the Elephant a hundred times at least during the past hour, whilst Emmy was closeted with her friend in the garret, and the Major was beating the tattoo on the sloppy tables of the public room below, and he was, on his side too, very anxious to see Mrs. Osborne.

"Well?" said he.

"The poor dear creature, how she has suffered!" Emmy said.

"God bless my soul, yes," Jos said, wagging his head, so that his cheeks quivered like jellies.

"She may have Payne's room, who can go up stairs," Emmy continued. Payne was a staid English maid and personal attendant upon Mrs. Osborne, to whom the courier, as in duty bound, paid court, and whom Georgy used to "lark" dreadfully with accounts of German robbers and ghosts. She passed her time chiefly in grumbling, in ordering about her mistress, and in stating her intention to return the next morning to her native village of Clapham. "She may have Payne's room," Emmy said.

"Why, you don't mean to say you are going to

have that woman into the *house?*" bounced out the Major, jumping up.

"Of course we are," said Amelia in the most innocent way in the world. "Don't be angry, and break the furniture, Major Dobbin. Of course we are going to have her here."

"Of course, my dear," Jos said.

"The poor creature, after all her sufferings," Emmy continued: "her horrid banker broken and run away: her husband — wicked wretch — having deserted her and taken her child away from her (here she doubled her two little fists and held them in a most menacing attitude before her, so that the Major was charmed to see such a dauntless virago), the poor dear thing! quite alone, and absolutely forced to give lessons in singing to get her bread — and not have her here!"

"Take lessons, my dear Mrs. George," cried the Major, "but don't have her in the house. I implore you, don't."

"Pooh," said Jos.

"You who are always good and kind: always used to be at any rate: I'm astonished at you, Major William," Amelia cried. "Why, what is the moment to help her but when she is so miserable? Now is the time to be of service to her. The oldest friend I ever had, and not —"

"She was not always your friend, Amelia," the Major said, for he was quite angry. This allusion was too much for Emmy, who, looking the Major almost fiercely in the face, said, "For shame, Major Dobbin!" and after having fired this shot, she walked out of the room with a most majestic air, and shut her own door briskly on herself and her outraged dignity.

"To allude to *that!*" she said, when the door was

closed. "Oh, it was cruel of him to remind me of it," and she looked up at George's picture, which hung there as usual, with the portrait of the boy underneath. "It was cruel of him. If I had forgiven it, ought he to have spoken? No. And it is from his own lips that I know how wicked and groundless my jealousy was; and that you were pure — Oh, yes, you were pure, my saint in heaven!"

She paced the room trembling and indignant. She went and leaned on the chest of drawers over which the picture hung, and gazed and gazed at it. Its eyes seemed to look down on her with a reproach that deepened as she looked. The early dear, dear memories of that brief prime of love rushed back upon her. The wound which years had scarcely cicatrized bled afresh, and oh, how bitterly! She could not bear the reproaches of the husband there before her. It could n't be. Never, never.

Poor Dobbin; poor old William! That unlucky word had undone the work of many a year — the long laborious edifice of a life of love and constancy — raised too upon what secret and hidden foundations, wherein lay buried passions, uncounted struggles, unknown sacrifices — a little word was spoken, and down fell the fair palace of hope — one word, and away flew the bird which he had been trying all his life to lure!

William, though he saw by Amelia's looks that a great crisis had come, nevertheless continued to implore Sedley, in the most energetic terms, to beware of Rebecca: and he eagerly, almost frantically, adjured Jos not to receive her. He besought Mr. Sedley to inquire at least regarding her: told him how he had heard that she was in the company of gamblers and people of ill repute; pointed out what evil she had

done in former days: how she and Crawley had misled poor George into ruin: how she was now parted from her husband, by her own confession, and, perhaps, for good reason. What a dangerous companion she would be for his sister, who knew nothing of the affairs of the world! William implored Jos, with all the eloquence which he could bring to bear, and a great deal more energy than this quiet gentleman was ordinarily in the habit of showing, to keep Rebecca out of his household.

Had he been less violent, or more dexterous, he might have succeeded in his supplications to Jos; but the civilian was not a little jealous of the airs of superiority which the Major constantly exhibited towards him, as he fancied (indeed, he had imparted his opinions to Mr. Kirsch, the courier, whose bills Major Dobbin checked on this journey, and who sided with his master), and he began a blustering speech about his competency to defend his own honor, his desire not to have his affairs meddled with, his intention, in fine, to rebel against the Major, when the colloquy — rather a long and stormy one — was put an end to in the simplest way possible, namely, by the arrival of Mrs. Becky, with a porter from the Elephant Hotel, in charge of her very meagre baggage.

She greeted her host with affectionate respect, and made a shrinking, but amicable, salutation to Major Dobbin, who, as her instinct assured her at once, was her enemy, and had been speaking against her; and the bustle and clatter consequent upon her arrival brought Amelia out of her room. Emmy went up and embraced her guest with the greatest warmth, and took no notice of the Major, except to fling him an angry look — the most unjust and scornful glance that had perhaps ever appeared in that poor little

woman's face since she was born. But she had private reasons of her own, and was bent upon being angry with him. And Dobbin, indignant at the injustice, not at the defeat, went off, making her a bow quite as haughty as the killing curtsy with which the little woman chose to bid him farewell.

He being gone, Emmy was particularly lively and affectionate to Rebecca, and bustled about the apartments and installed her guest in her room with an eagerness and activity seldom exhibited by our placid little friend. But when an act of injustice is to be done, especially by weak people, it is best that it should be done quickly; and Emmy thought she was displaying a great deal of firmness and proper feeling and veneration for the late Captain Osborne in her present behavior.

Georgy came in from the fêtes for dinner-time, and found four covers laid as usual; but one of the places was occupied by a lady, instead of by Major Dobbin. "Hullo! where 's Dob?" the young gentleman asked, with his usual simplicity of language. "Major Dobbin is dining out, I suppose," his mother said; and, drawing the boy to her, kissed him a great deal, and put his hair off his forehead, and introduced him to Mrs. Crawley. "This is my boy, Rebecca," Mrs. Osborne said — as much as to say — can the world produce anything like that? Becky looked at him with rapture, and pressed his hand fondly. "Dear boy!" she said — "he is just like my —" Emotion choked her further utterance; but Amelia understood, as well as if she had spoken, that Becky was thinking of her own blessed child. However, the company of her friend consoled Mrs. Crawley, and she ate a very good dinner.

During the repast, she had occasion to speak sev-

eral times, when Georgy eyed her and listened to her. At the dessert Emmy was gone out to superintend further domestic arrangements: Jos was in his great chair dozing over "Galignani:" Georgy and the new arrival sat close to each other: he had continued to look at her knowingly more than once, and at last, he laid down the nut-crackers.

"I say," said Georgy.

"What do you say?" Becky said, laughing.

"You are the lady I saw in the mask at the *rouge et noir*."

"Hush! you little sly creature," Becky said, taking up his hand and kissing it. "Your uncle was there too, and Mamma must n't know."

"Oh no — not by no means," answered the little fellow.

"You see we are quite good friends already, Becky said to Emmy, who now re-entered; and it must be owned that Mrs. Osborne had introduced a most judicious and amiable companion into her house.

William, in a state of great indignation, though still unaware of all the treason that was in store for him, walked about the town wildly until he fell upon the Secretary of Legation, Tapeworm, who invited him to dinner. As they were discussing that meal, he took occasion to ask the Secretary whether he knew anything about a certain Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, who had, he believed, made some noise in London; and then Tapeworm, who of course knew all the London gossip, and was besides a relative of Lady Gaunt, poured out into the astonished Major's ears such a history about Becky and her husband as astonished the querist, and supplied all the points of this narrative, for it was at that very table years ago that

the present writer had the pleasure of hearing the tale. Tufto, Steyne, the Crawleys, and their history — everything connected with Becky and her previous life passed under the record of the bitter diplomatist. He knew everything and a great deal besides, about all the world; — in a word, he made the most astounding revelations to the simple-hearted Major. When Dobbin said that Mrs. Osborne and Mr. Sedley had taken her into their house, Tapeworm burst into a peal of laughter which shocked the Major, and asked if they had not better send into the prison, and take in one or two of the gentlemen in shaved heads and yellow jackets, who swept the streets of Pumpernickel, chained in pairs, to board and lodge, and act as tutor to that little scapegrace Georgy.

This information astonished and horrified the Major not a little. It had been agreed in the morning (before meeting with Rebecca) that Amelia should go to the court ball that night. There would be the place where he should tell her. The Major went home and dressed himself in his uniform, and repaired to court in hopes to see Mrs. Osborne. She never came. When he returned to his lodgings all the lights in the Sedley tenement were put out. He could not see her till the morning. I don't know what sort of a night's rest he had with this frightful secret in bed with him.

At the earliest convenient hour in the morning he sent his servant across the way with a note, saying, that he wished very particularly to speak with her. A message came back to say, that Mrs. Osborne was exceedingly unwell, and was keeping her room.

She too, had been awake all that night. She had been thinking of a thing which had agitated her mind a hundred times before. A hundred times on the

point of yielding, she had shrunk back from a sacrifice which she felt was too much for her. She could n't, in spite of his love and constancy, and her own acknowledged regard, respect, and gratitude. What are benefits, what is constancy, or merit? One curl of a girl's ringlet, one hair of a whisker, will turn the scale against them all in a minute. They did not weigh with Emmy more than with other women. She had tried them; wanted to make them pass; could not; and the pitiless little woman had found a pretext, and determined to be free.

When at length, in the afternoon, the Major gained admission to Amelia, instead of the cordial and affectionate greeting, to which he had been accustomed now for many a long day, he received the salutation of a curtsy, and of a little gloved hand, retracted the moment after it was accorded to him.

Rebecca, too, was in the room, and advanced to meet him with a smile and an extended hand. Dobbin drew back rather confusedly. "I — I beg your pardon, Ma'am," he said; "but I am bound to tell you that it is not as your friend that I am come here now."

"Pooh! damn; don't let us have this sort of thing!" Jos cried out, alarmed, and anxious to get rid of a scene.

"I wonder what Major Dobbin has to say against Rebecca?" Amelia said in a low, clear voice with a slight quiver in it, and a very determined look about the eyes.

"I will *not* have this sort of thing in my house," Jos again interposed. "I say I will not have it: and Dobbin, I beg, sir, you 'll stop it." And he looked round trembling and turning very red, and gave a great puff, and made for his door.

"Dear friend!" Rebecca said with angelic sweetness, "do hear what Major Dobbin has to say against me."

"I will *not* hear it, I say," squeaked out Jos at the top of his voice, and, gathering up his dressing-gown, he was gone.

"We are only two women," Amelia said. "You can speak now, sir."

"This manner towards me is one which scarcely becomes you, Amelia," the Major answered haughtily; "nor I believe am I guilty of habitual harshness to women. It is not a pleasure to me to do the duty which I am come to do."

"Pray proceed with it quickly, if you please, Major Dobbin," said Amelia, who was more and more in a pet. The expression of Dobbin's face, as she spoke in this imperious manner, was not pleasant.

"I came to say — and as you stay, Mrs. Crawley, I must say it in your presence — that I think you — you ought not to form a member of the family of my friends. A lady who is separated from her husband, who travels not under her own name, who frequents public gaming-tables — "

"It was to the ball I went," cried out Becky.

"— is not a fit companion for Mrs. Osborne and her son," Dobbin went on: "and I may add that there are people here who know you, and who profess to know that regarding your conduct, about which I don't even wish to speak before — before Mrs. Osborne."

"Yours is a very modest and convenient sort of calumny, Major Dobbin," Rebecca said. "You leave me under the weight of an accusation which, after all, is unsaid. What is it? Is it unfaithfulness to my husband? I scorn it, and defy anybody to prove it — I defy you, I say. My honor is as untouched as

that of the bitterest enemy who ever maligned me. Is it of being poor, forsaken, wretched, that you accuse me? Yes, I am guilty of those faults, and punished for them every day. Let me go, Emmy. It is only to suppose that I have not met you, and I am no worse to-day than I was yesterday. It is only to suppose that the night is over and the poor wanderer is on her way. Don't you remember the song we used to sing in old, dear old days? I have been wandering ever since then — a poor castaway, scorned for being miserable, and insulted because I am alone. Let me go: my stay here interferes with the plans of this gentleman."

"Indeed it does, Madam," said the Major. "If I have any authority in this house —"

"Authority, none!" broke out Amelia. "Rebecca, you stay with me. *I* won't desert you, because you have been persecuted, or insult you, because — because Major Dobbin chooses to do so. Come away, dear." And the two women made towards their door.

William opened it. As they were going out, however, he took Amelia's hand, and said — "Will you stay a moment and speak to me?"

"He wishes to speak to you away from me," said Becky, looking like a martyr. Amelia griped her hand in reply.

"Upon my honor it is not about you that I am going to speak," Dobbin said. "Come back, Amelia," and she came. Dobbin bowed to Mrs. Crawley, as he shut the door upon her. Amelia looked at him, leaning against the glass: her face and her lips were quite white.

"I was confused when I spoke just now," the Major said, after a pause; "and I misused the word authority."

"You did," said Amelia, with her teeth chattering.

"At least I have claims to be heard," Dobbin continued.

"It is generous to remind me of our obligations to you," the woman answerd.

"The claims I mean, are those left me by George's father," William said.

"Yes, and you insulted his memory. You did yesterday. You know you did. And I will never forgive you. Never!" said Amelia. She shot out each little sentence in a tremor of anger and emotion.

"You don't mean that, Amelia?" William said, sadly. "You don't mean that these words, uttered in a hurried moment, are to weigh against a whole life's devotion? I think that George's memory has not been injured by the way in which I have dealt with it, and if we are come to bandying reproaches, I at least merit none from his widow and the mother of his son. Reflect, afterwards when — when you are at leisure, and your conscience will withdraw this accusation. It does even now." Amelia held down her head.

"It is not that speech of yesterday," he continued, "which moves you. That is but the pretext, Amelia, or I have loved you and watched you for fifteen years in vain. Have I not learned in that time to read all your feelings, and look into your thoughts? I know what your heart is capable of: it can cling faithfully to a recollection, and cherish a fancy; but it can't feel such an attachment as mine deserves to mate with, and such as I would have won from a woman more generous than you. No, you are not worthy of the love which I have devoted to you. I knew all along that the prize I had set my life on was not worth the winning; that I was a fool, with fond fan-

cies, too, bartering away my all of truth and ardor against your little feeble remnant of love. I will bargain no more: I withdraw. I find no fault with you. You are very good-natured, and have done your best; but you could n't — you could n't reach up to the height of the attachment which I bore you, and which a loftier soul than yours might have been proud to share. Good-by, Amelia! I have watched your struggle. Let it end. We are both weary of it."

Amelia stood scared and silent as William thus suddenly broke the chain by which she held him, and declared his independence and superiority. He had placed himself at her feet so long that the poor little woman had been accustomed to trample upon him. She did n't wish to marry him, but she wished to keep him. She wished to give him nothing, but that he should give her all. It is a bargain not unfrequently levied in love.

William's sally had quite broken and cast her down. *Her* assault was long since over and beaten back.

"Am I to understand then, — that you are going — away, — William?" she said.

He gave a sad laugh. "I went once before," he said, "and came back after twelve years. We were young then, Amelia. Good-by. I have spent enough of my life at this play."

Whilst they had been talking, the door into Mrs. Osborne's room had opened ever so little; indeed, Becky had kept a hold of the handle, and had turned it on the instant when Dobbin quitted it; and she heard every word of the conversation that had passed between these two. "What a noble heart that man has," she thought, "and how shamefully that woman plays with it." She admired Dobbin; she bore him no rancor for the part he had taken against her. It

was an open move in the game, and played fairly. "Ah!" she thought, "if I could have had such a husband as that — a man with a heart and brains too! I would not have minded his large feet;" and running into her room, she absolutely bethought herself of something, and wrote him a note, beseeching him to stop for a few days — not to think of going — and that she could serve him with A.

The parting was over. Once more poor William walked to the door and was gone; and the little widow, the author of all this work, had her will, and had won her victory, and was left to enjoy it as she best might. Let the ladies envy her triumph.

At the romantic hour of dinner, Mr. Georgy made his appearance, and again remarked the absence of "Old Dob." The meal was eaten in silence by the party. Jos's appetite not being diminished, but Emmy taking nothing at all.

After the meal, Georgy was lolling in the cushions of the old window, a large window, with three sides of glass abutting from the gable, and commanding on one side the market-place, where the Elephant is, his mother being busy hard by, when he remarked symptoms of movement at the Major's house on the other side of the street.

"Hullo!" said he, "there 's Dob's trap — they are bringing it out of the court-yard." The "trap" in question was a carriage which the Major had bought for six pounds sterling, and about which they used to rally him a good deal.

Emmy gave a little start but said nothing.

"Hullo!" Georgy continued, "there 's Francis coming out with the portmanteaus, and Kunz, the one-eyed postilion, coming down the market with three *schimmels*. Look at his boots and yellow jacket, —

ain't he a rum one? Why — they 're putting the horses to Dob's carriage. Is he going anywhere?"

"Yes," said Emmy, "he is going on a journey."

"Going a journey; and when is he coming back?"

"He is — not coming back," answered Emmy.

"Not coming back!" cried out Georgy, jumping up. "Stay here, sir," roared out Jos. "Stay, Georgy," said his mother, with a very sad face. The boy stopped; kicked about the room; jumped up and down from the window-seat with his knees, and showed every symptom of uneasiness and curiosity.

The horses were put to. The baggage was strapped on. Francis came out with his master's sword, cane, and umbrella tied up together, and laid them in the well, and his desk and old tin cocked-hat case, which he placed under the seat. Francis brought out the stained old blue cloak lined with red camlet, which had wrapped the owner up any time these fifteen years, and had *manchen Sturm erlebt*, as a favorite song of those days said. It had been new for the campaign of Waterloo, and had covered George and William after the night of Quatre Bras.

Old Burcke, the landlord of the lodgings, came out, then Francis, with more packages — final packages — then Major William, — Burcke wanted to kiss him. The Major was adored by all people with whom he had to do. It was with difficulty he could escape from this demonstration of attachment.

"By Jove, I *will* go!" screamed out George. "Give him this," said Becky, quite interested, and put a paper into the boy's hand. He had rushed down the stairs and flung across the street in a minute — the yellow postilion was cracking his whip gently.

William had got into the carriage, released from the embraces of his landlord. George bounded in

afterwards and flung his arms round the Major's neck (as they saw from the window), and began asking him multiplied questions. Then he felt in his waistcoat-pocket and gave him a note. William seized at it rather eagerly, he opened it trembling, but instantly his countenance changed, and he tore the paper in two, and dropped it out of the carriage. He kissed Georgy on the head, and the boy got out, doubling his fists into his eyes, and with the aid of Francis. He lingered with his hand on the panel. Fort Schwager! The yellow postilion cracked his whip prodigiously, up sprang Francis to the box, away went the *schimmels*, and Dobbin with his head on his breast. He never looked up as they passed under Amelia's window: and Georgy, left alone in the street, burst out crying in the face of all the crowd.

Emmy's maid heard him howling again during the night, and brought him some preserved apricots to console him. She mingled her lamentations with his. All the poor, all the humble, all honest folks, all good men who knew him, loved that kind-hearted and simple gentleman.

As for Emmy, had she not done her duty? She had her picture of George for a consolation.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHICH CONTAINS BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS.

WHATEVER Becky's private plan might be by which Dobbin's true love was to be crowned with success, the little woman thought that the secret might keep, and indeed, being by no means so much interested about anybody's welfare as about her own, she had a great number of things pertaining to herself to consider, and which concerned her a great deal more than Major Dobbin's happiness in this life.

She found herself suddenly and unexpectedly in snug comfortable quarters: surrounded by friends, kindness, and good-natured simple people, such as she had not met with for many a long day; and, wanderer as she was by force and inclination, there were moments when rest was pleasant to her. As the most hardened Arab that ever careered across the Desert over the hump of a dromedary, likes to repose sometimes under the date-trees by the water; or to come into the cities, walk in the bazaars, refresh himself in the baths, and say his prayers in the mosques, before he goes out again marauding; Jos's tents and *pilau* were pleasant to this little Ishmaelite. She picketed her steed, hung up her weapons, and warmed herself comfortably by his fire. The halt in that roving, restless life, was inexpressibly soothing and pleasant to her.

So, pleased herself, she tried with all her might to please everybody; and we know that she was eminent and successful as a practitioner in the art of giving pleasure. As for Jos, even in that little interview in the garret at the Elephant Inn, she had found means to win back a great deal of his good-will. In the course of a week, the civilian was her sworn slave and frantic admirer. He did n't go to sleep after dinner, as his custom was, in the much less lively society of Amelia. He drove out with Becky in his open carriage. He asked little parties and invented festivities to do her honor.

Tapeworm, the *Chargé d'Affaires*, who had abused her so cruelly, came to dine with Jos, and then came every day to pay his respects to Becky. Poor Emmy, who was never very talkative, and more glum and silent than ever after Dobbin's departure, was quite forgotten when this superior genius made her appearance. The French minister was as much charmed with her as his English rival. The German ladies, never particularly squeamish as regards morals, especially in English people, were delighted with the cleverness and wit of Mrs. Osborne's charming friend; and though she did not ask to go to court, yet the most august and Transparent Personages there heard of her fascinations, and were quite curious to know her. When it became known that she was noble, of an ancient English family, that her husband was a Colonel of the Guard, Excellenz and Governor of an island, only separated from his lady by one of those trifling differences which are of little account in a country where "Werther" is still read, and the "Wahlverwandschaften" of Goethe is considered an edifying moral book, nobody thought of refusing to receive her in the very highest society of the little

Duchy; and the ladies were even more ready to call her *du*, and to swear eternal friendship for her, than they had been to bestow the same inestimable benefits upon Amelia. Love and Liberty are interpreted by those simple Germans in a way which honest folks in Yorkshire and Somersetshire little understand; and a lady might, in some philosophic and civilized towns, be divorced ever so many times from her respective husbands, and keep her character in society. Jos's house never was so pleasant since he had a house of his own, as Rebecca caused it to be. She sang, she played, she laughed, she talked in two or three languages; she brought everybody to the house: and she made Jos believe that it was his own great social talents and wit which gathered the society of the place round about him.

As for Emmy, who found herself not in the least mistress of her own house, except when the bills were to be paid, Becky soon discovered the way to soothe and please her. She talked to her perpetually about Major Dobbin sent about his business, and made no scruple of declaring her admiration for that excellent, high-minded gentleman, and of telling Emmy that she had behaved most cruelly regarding him. Emmy defended her conduct, and showed that it was dictated only by the purest religious principles; that a woman once, etc., and to such an angel as him whom she had had the good fortune to marry, was married forever; but she had no objection to hear the Major praised as much as ever Becky chose to praise him; and indeed brought the conversation round to the Dobbin subject a score of times every day.

Means were easily found to win the favor of Georgy and the servants. Amelia's maid, it has been said, was heart and soul in favor of the generous Major.

Having at first disliked Becky for being the means of dismissing him from the presence of her mistress, she was reconciled to Mrs. Crawley subsequently, because the latter became William's most ardent admirer and champion. And in those nightly conclaves in which the two ladies indulged after their parties, and while Miss Payne was "brushing their 'airs," as she called the yellow locks of the one, and the soft brown tresses of the other, this girl always put in her word for that dear good gentleman Major Dobbin. Her advocacy did not make Amelia angry any more than Rebecca's admiration of him. She made George write to him constantly, and persisted in sending Mamma's kind love in a postscript. And as she looked at her husband's portrait of nights, it no longer reproached her — perhaps she reproached it, now William was gone.

Emmy was not very happy after her heroic sacrifice. She was very *distraite*, nervous, silent, and ill to please. The family had never known her so peevish. She grew pale and ill. She used to try and sing certain songs ("Einsam bin ich nicht alleine," was one of them; that tender love-song of Weber's, which, in old-fashioned days, young ladies, and when you were scarcely born, showed that those who lived before you knew too how to love and to sing); — certain songs, I say, to which the Major was partial; and as she warbled them in the twilight in the drawing-room, she would break off in the midst of the song, and walk into her neighboring apartment, and there, no doubt, take refuge in the miniature of her husband.

Some books still subsisted, after Dobbin's departure, with his name written in them; a German Dictionary, for instance, with "William Dobbin, — th Reg.," in the fly-leaf; a guide-book with his initials, and one or two

other volumes which belonged to the Major. Emmy cleared these away, and put them on the drawers, where she placed her work-box, her desk, her Bible, and Prayer-book, under the pictures of the two Georges. And the Major, on going away, having left his gloves behind him, it is a fact that Georgy, rummaging his mother's desk some time afterwards, found the gloves neatly folded up, and put away in what they call the secret drawers of the desk.

Not caring for society, and moping there a great deal, Emmy's chief pleasure in the summer evenings was to take long walks with Georgy (during which Rebecca was left to the society of Mr. Joseph), and then the mother and son used to talk about the Major in a way which even made the boy smile. She told him that she thought Major William was the best man in all the world; the gentlest and the kindest, the bravest and the humblest. Over and over again, she told him how they owed everything which they possessed in the world to that kind friend's benevolent care of them; how he had befriended them all through their poverty and misfortunes; watched over them when nobody cared for them; how all his comrades admired him though he never spoke of his own gallant actions; how Georgy's father trusted him beyond all other men, and had been constantly befriended by the good William. "Why, when your papa was a little boy," she said, "he often told me that it was William who defended him against a tyrant at the school where they were; and their friendship never ceased from that day until the last, when your dear father fell."

"Did Dobbin kill the man who killed Papa?" Georgy said. "I'm sure he did, or he would if he could have caught him; would n't he, Mother? When

I 'm in the army, won't I hate the French? — that 's all."

In such colloquies the mother and the child passed a great deal of their time together. The artless woman had made a confidant of the boy. He was as much William's friend as everybody else who knew him well.

By the way, Mrs. Becky, not to be behind-hand in sentiment, had got a miniature too hanging up in her room, to the surprise and amusement of most people, and the delight of the original, who was no other than our friend Jos. On her first coming to favor the Sedleys with a visit, the little woman, who had arrived with a remarkably small shabby kit, was perhaps ashamed of the meanness of her trunks and bandboxes, and often spoke with great respect about her baggage left behind at Leipzig, which she must have from that city. When a traveller talks to you perpetually about the splendor of his luggage, which he does not happen to have with him; my son, beware of that traveller! He is, ten to one, an impostor.

Neither Jos nor Emmy knew this important maxim. It seemed to them of no consequence whether Becky had a quantity of very fine clothes in invisible trunks; but as her present supply was exceedingly shabby, Emmy supplied her out of her own stores, or took her to the best milliner in the town, and there fitted her out. It was no more torn collars now, I promise you, and faded silks trailing off at the shoulder. Becky changed her habits with her situation in life — the rouge-pot was suspended — another excitement to which she had accustomed herself was also put aside, or at least only indulged in in privacy; as when she was prevailed on by Jos of a summer evening, Emmy and the boy being absent on their walks, to take a lit-

tle spirit-and-water. But if she did not indulge — the courier did: that rascal Kirsch could not be kept from the bottle, nor could he tell how much he took when he applied to it. He was sometimes surprised himself at the way in which Mr. Sedley's cognac diminished. Well, well; this is a painful subject. Becky did not very likely indulge so much as she used before she entered a decorous family.

At last the much-bragged-about boxes arrived from Leipzig, — three of them not by any means large or splendid; — nor did Becky appear to take out any sort of dresses or ornaments from the boxes when they did arrive. But out of one, which contained a mass of her papers (it was that very box which Rawdon Crawley had ransacked in his furious hunt for Becky's concealed money), she took a picture with great glee, which she pinned up in her room, and to which she introduced Jos. It was the portrait of a gentleman in pencil, his face having the advantage of being painted up in pink. He was riding on an elephant away from some cocoanut-trees, and a pagoda: it was an Eastern scene.

"God bless my soul, it is my portrait," Jos cried out. It was he indeed, blooming in youth and beauty, in a nankeen jacket of the cut of 1804. It was the old picture that used to hang up in Russell Square.

"I bought it," said Becky, in a voice trembling with emotion; "I went to see if I could be of any use to my kind friends. I have never parted with that picture — I never will."

"Won't you?" Jos cried, with a look of unutterable rapture and satisfaction. "Did you really now value it for my sake?"

"You know I did, well enough," said Becky; "but why speak, — why think, — why look back! It is too late now!"

That evening's conversation was delicious for Jos. Emmy only came in to go to bed very tired and unwell. Jos and his fair guest had a charming *tête-à-tête*, and his sister could hear, as she lay awake in her adjoining chamber, Rebecca singing over to Jos the old songs of 1815. He did not sleep, for a wonder, that night, any more than Amelia.

It was June, and, by consequence, high season in London; Jos, who read the incomparable "Galignani" (the exile's best friend) through every day, used to favor the ladies with extracts from his paper during their breakfast. Every week in this paper there is a full account of military movements, in which Jos, as a man who had seen service, was especially interested. On one occasion he read out — "Arrival of the — th regiment. Gravesend, June 20. The 'Ramchunder,' East Indiaman, came into the river this morning, having on board fourteen officers, and one hundred and thirty-two rank and file of this gallant corps. They have been absent from England fourteen years, having been embarked the year after Waterloo, in which glorious conflict they took an active part, and having subsequently distinguished themselves in the Burmese war. The veteran colonel, Sir Michael O'Dowd, K.C.B., with his lady and sister, landed here yesterday, with Captains Posky, Stubble, Macraw, Malony; Lieutenants Smith, Jones, Thompson, F. Thomson; Ensigns Hicks and Grady; the band on the pier playing the national anthem, and the crowd loudly cheering the gallant veterans as they went into Wayte's hotel, where a sumptuous banquet was provided for the defenders of Old England. During the repast, which we need not say was served up in Wayte's best style, the cheering continued so enthusiastically, that Lady O'Dowd and the Colonel came forward to the

balcony, and drank the healths of their fellow-countrymen in a bumper of Wayte's best claret."

On a second occasion Jos read a brief announcement — Major Dobbin had joined the — th regiment at Chatham; and subsequently he promulgated accounts of the presentations at the Drawing-room, of Colonel Sir Michael O'Dowd, K.C.B., Lady O'Dowd (by Mrs. Molloy Malony of Ballymalony), and Miss Glorvina O'Dowd (by Lady O'Dowd). Almost directly after this, Dobbin's name appeared among the Lieutenant-Colonels: for old Marshall Tiptoff had died during the passage of the — th from Madras, and the Sovereign was pleased to advance Colonel Sir Michael O'Dowd to the rank of Major-General on his return to England, with an intimation that he should be Colonel of the distinguished regiment which he had so long commanded.

Amelia had been made aware of some of these movements. The correspondence between George and his guardian had not ceased by any means: William had even written once or twice to her since his departure, but in a manner so unconstrainedly cold, that the poor woman felt now in her turn that she had lost her power over him, and that, as he had said, he was free. He had left her, and she was wretched. The memory of his almost countless services, and lofty and affectionate regard, now presented itself to her, and rebuked her day and night. She brooded over those recollections according to her wont; saw the purity and beauty of the affection with which she had trifled, and reproached herself for having flung away such a treasure.

It was gone indeed. William had spent it all out. He loved her no more, he thought, as he had loved

her. He never could again. That sort of regard, which he had proffered to her for so many faithful years, can't be flung down and shattered, and mended so as to show no scars. The little heedless tyrant had so destroyed it. No, William thought again and again, "It was myself I deluded, and persisted in cajoling; had she been worthy of the love I gave her, she would have returned it long ago. It was a fond mistake. Is n't the whole course of life made up of such? and suppose I had won her, should I not have been disenchanted the day after my victory? Why pine, or be ashamed of my defeat?" The more he thought of this long passage of his life, the more clearly he saw his deception. "I'll go into harness again," he said, "and do my duty in that state of life in which it has pleased Heaven to place me. I will see that the buttons of the recruits are properly bright, and that the sergeants make no mistakes in their accounts. I will dine at mess, and listen to the Scotch surgeon telling his stories. When I am old and broken, I will go on half-pay, and my old sisters shall scold me. I have '*geliebt* and *gelebet*' as the girl in 'Wallenstein' says. I am done. — Pay the bills, and get me a cigar: find out what there is at the play to-night, Francis; to-morrow we cross by the 'Batavier.'" He made the above speech, whereof Francis only heard the last two lines, pacing up and down the Boompjes at Rotterdam. The "Batavier" was lying in the basin. He could see the place on the quarter-deck, where he and Emmy had sat on the happy voyage out. What had that little Mrs. Crawley to say to him? Psha! to-morrow we will put to sea, and return to England, home, and duty!

After June all the little court society of Pumpernickel used to separate, according to the German plan,

and make for a hundred watering-places, where they drank at the wells; rode upon donkeys; gambled at the *redoutes*, if they had money and a mind; rushed with hundreds of their kind, to gormandize at the *tables d'hôte*; and idled away the summer. The English diplomatists went off to Toeplitz and Kissengen, their French rivals shut up their *Chancellerie* and whisked away to their darling Boulevard de Gand. The Transparent reigning family took too to the waters, or retired to their hunting-lodges. Everybody went away having any pretensions to politeness, and, of course, with them, Doctor von Glauber, the court doctor, and his Baroness. The seasons for the baths were the most productive periods of the doctor's practice — he united business with pleasure, and his chief place of resort was Ostend, which is much frequented by Germans, and where the doctor treated himself and his spouse to what he called a "dib" in the sea.

His interesting patient, Jos, was a regular milch cow to the doctor, and he easily persuaded the civilian, both for his own health's sake and that of his charming sister, which was really very much shattered, to pass the summer at that hideous seaport town. Emmy did not care where she went much. Georgy jumped at the idea of a move. As for Becky, she came as a matter of course in the fourth place inside of the fine barouche Mr. Jos had bought: the two domestics being on the box in front. She might have some misgivings about the friends whom she should meet at Ostend, and who might be likely to tell ugly stories — but bah! she was strong enough to hold her own. She had cast such an anchor in Jos now as would require a strong storm to shake. That incident of the picture had finished him. Becky took down her elephant, and put it into the little box

which she had had from Amelia ever so many years ago. Emmy also came off with her Lares, — her two pictures, — and the party, finally, were lodged in an exceedingly dear and uncomfortable house at Ostend.

There Amelia began to take baths, and get what good she could from them, and though scores of people of Becky's acquaintance passed her and cut her, yet Mrs. Osborne, who walked about with her, and who knew nobody, was not aware of the treatment experienced by the friend whom she had chosen so judiciously as a companion; indeed, Becky never thought fit to tell her what was passing under her innocent eyes.

Some of Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's acquaintances, however, acknowledged her readily enough, — perhaps more readily than she would have desired. Among those were Major Loder (unattached), and Captain Rook (late of the Rifles), who might be seen any day on the Dyke, smoking and staring at the women, and who speedily got an introduction to the hospitable board and select circle of Mr. Joseph Sedley. In fact, they would take no denial; they burst into the house whether Becky was at home or not, walked into Mrs. Osborne's drawing-room, which they perfumed with their coats and mustachios, called Jos "old buck," and invaded his dinner-table, and laughed and drank for long hours there.

"What can they mean?" asked Georgy, who did not like these gentlemen. "I heard the Major say to Mrs. Crawley yesterday, 'No, no, Becky, you sha'n't keep the old buck to yourself. We must have the bones in, or dammy, I'll split.' What could the Major mean, Mamma?"

"Major! don't call *him* Major!" Emmy said. "I 'm sure I can't tell what he meant." His presence

and that of his friend inspired the little lady with intolerable terror and aversion. They paid her tipsy compliments; they leered at her over the dinner-table. And the Captain made her advances that filled her with sickening dismay, nor would she ever see him unless she had George by her side.

Rebecca, to do her justice, never would let either of these men remain alone with Amelia; the Major was disengaged too, and swore he would be the winner of her. A couple of ruffians were fighting for this innocent creature, gambling for her at her own table; and though she was not aware of the rascals' designs upon her, yet she felt a horror and uneasiness in their presence, and longed to fly.

She besought, she entreated Jos to go. Not he. He was slow of movement, tied to his doctor, and perhaps to some other leading-strings. At least Becky was not anxious to go to England.

At last she took a great resolution — made the great plunge. She wrote off a letter to a friend whom she had on the other side of the water; a letter about which she did not speak a word to anybody, which she carried herself to the post under her shawl, nor was any remark made about it; only that she looked very much flushed and agitated when Georgy met her; and she kissed him and hung over him a great deal that night. She did not come out of her room after her return from her walk. Becky thought it was Major Loder and the Captain who frightened her.

"She must n't stop here," Becky reasoned with herself. "She must go away, the silly little fool. She is still whimpering after that gaby of a husband — dead (and served right!) these fifteen years. She sha'n't marry either of these men. It 's too bad of

Loder. No; she shall marry the bamboo cane, I 'll settle it this very night."

So Becky took a cup of tea to Amelia in her private apartment, and found that lady in the company of her miniatures, and in a most melancholy and nervous condition. She laid down the cup of tea.

"Thank you," said Amelia.

"Listen to me, Amelia," said Becky, marching up and down the room before the other, and surveying her with a sort of contemptuous kindness. "I want to talk to you. You must go away from here and from the impertinences of these men. I won't have you harassed by them: and they will insult you if you stay. I tell you they are rascals; men fit to send to the hulks. Never mind how I know them. I know everybody. Jos can't protect you, he is too weak, and wants a protector himself. You are no more fit to live in the world than a baby in arms. You must marry, or you and your precious boy will go to ruin. You must have a husband, you fool; and one of the best gentlemen I ever saw has offered you a hundred times, and you have rejected him, you silly, heartless, ungrateful little creature!"

"I tried — I tried my best, indeed I did, Rebecca," said Amelia, deprecatingly, "but I could n't forget — " and she finished the sentence by looking up at the portrait.

"Could n't forget *him!*" cried out Becky, "that selfish humbug, that low-bred cockney-dandy, that padded booby, who had neither wit, nor manners, nor heart, and was no more to be compared to your friend with the bamboo cane than you are to Queen Elizabeth. Why, the man was weary of you, and would have jilted you, but that Dobbin forced him to keep his word. He owned it to me. He never cared for

you. He used to sneer about you to me, time after time; and made love to me the week after he married you."

"It 's false! It 's false! Rebecca," cried out Amelia, starting up.

"Look there, you fool," Becky said, still with provoking good-humor, and taking a little paper out of her belt, she opened it and flung it into Emmy's lap. "You know his handwriting. He wrote that to me — wanted me to run away with him — gave it me under your nose, the day before he was shot — and served him right!" Becky repeated.

Emmy did not hear her; she was looking at the letter. It was that which George had put into the bouquet and given to Becky on the night of the Duchess of Richmond's ball. It was as she said: the foolish young man had asked her to fly.

Emmy's head sank down, and for almost the last time in which she shall be called upon to weep in this history, she commenced that work. Her head fell to her bosom, and her hands went up to her eyes; and there for a while, she gave way to her emotions, as Becky stood on and regarded her. Who shall analyze those tears, and say whether they were sweet or bitter? Was she most grieved, because the idol of her life was tumbled down and shivered at her feet, or indignant that her love had been so despised, or glad because the barrier was removed which modesty had placed between her and a new, a real affection? "There is nothing to forbid me now," she thought. "I may love him with all my heart now. Oh, I will, I will, if he will but let me, and forgive me." I believe it was this feeling rushed over all the others which agitated that gentle little bosom.

Indeed, she did not cry so much as Becky expected

THE LETTER BEFORE WATERLOO.

— the other soothed and kissed her — a rare mark of sympathy with Mrs. Becky. She treated Emmy like a child, and patted her head. "And now let us get pen and ink, and write to him to come this minute," she said.

"I — I wrote to him this morning," Emmy said, blushing exceedingly. Becky screamed with laughter — "*Un biglietto*," she sang out with Rosina, "*eccolo quà!*" — the whole house echoed with her shrill singing.

Two mornings after this little scene, although the day was rainy and gusty, and Amelia had had an exceedingly wakeful night, listening to the wind roaring, and pitying all travellers by land and by water, yet she got up early, and insisted upon taking a walk on the Dyke with Georgy; and there she paced as the rain beat into her face, and she looked out westward across the dark sea-line, and over the swollen billows which came tumbling and frothing to the shore. Neither spoke much, except now and then, when the boy said a few words to his timid companion, indicative of sympathy and protection.

"I hope he won't cross in such weather," Emmy said.

"I bet ten to one he does," the boy answered. "Look, Mother, there's the smoke of the steamer." It was that signal, sure enough.

But though the steamer was under weigh, he might not be on board; he might not have got the letter; he might not choose to come. — A hundred fears poured one over the other into the little heart, as fast as the waves on to the Dyke.

The boat followed the smoke into sight. Georgy had a dandy telescope, and got the vessel under view in the most skilful manner. And he made ap-

propriate nautical comments upon the manner of the approach of the steamer as she came nearer and nearer, dipping and rising in the water. The signal of an English steamer in sight went fluttering up to the mast on the pier. I dare say Mrs. Amelia's heart was in a similar flutter.

Emmy tried to look through the telescope over George's shoulder, but she could make nothing of it. She only saw a black eclipse bobbing up and down before her eyes.

George took the glass again and raked the vessel. "How she does pitch!" he said. "There goes a wave slap over her bows. There 's only two people on deck besides the steersman. "There 's a man lying down, and a — chap in a — cloak with a — Hooray! — It 's Dob by Jingo!" He clapped to the telescope and flung his arms round his mother. As for that lady: let us say what she did in the words of a favorite poet — Δακρυσεν γελασασα. She was sure it was William. It could be no other. What she had said about hoping that he would not come was all hypocrisy. Of course he would come: what could he do else but come? She knew he would come.

The ship came swiftly nearer and nearer. As they went in to meet her at the landing-place at the quay, Emmy's knees trembled so that she scarcely could run. She would have liked to kneel down and say her prayers of thanks there. Oh, she thought, she would be all her life saying them!

It was such a bad day that as the vessel came alongside of the quay there were no idlers abroad; scarcely even a commissioner on the lookout for the few passengers in the steamer. That young scapegrace George had fled too: and as the gentleman in the old cloak lined with red stuff stepped on to the shore, there was

scarcely any one present to see what took place, which was briefly this:

A lady in a dripping white bonnet and shawl, with her two little hands out before her, went up to him, and in the next minute she had altogether disappeared under the folds of the old cloak, and was kissing one of his hands with all her might; whilst the other, I suppose, was engaged in holding her to his heart (which her head just about reached) and in preventing her from tumbling down. She was murmuring something about — forgive — dear William — dear, dear, dearest friend — kiss, kiss, kiss, and so forth — and in fact went on under the cloak in an absurd manner.

When Emmy emerged from it, she still kept tight hold of one of William's hands, and looked up in his face. It was full of sadness and tender love and pity. She understood its reproach and hung down her head.

"It was time you sent for me, dear Amelia," he said.

"You will never go again, William."

"No, never," he answered: and pressed the dear little soul once more to his heart.

As they issued out of the Custom-house precincts, Georgy broke out on them, with his telescope up to his eye, and a loud laugh of welcome; he danced round the couple, and performed many facetious antics as he led them up to the house. Jos was n't up yet; Becky not visible (though she looked at them through the blinds). Georgy ran off to see about breakfast. Emmy, whose shawl and bonnet were off in the passage in the hands of Miss Payne, now went to undo the clasp of William's cloak, and — we will, if you please, go with George, and look after

breakfast for the Colonel. The vessel is in port. He has got the prize he has been trying for all his life. The bird has come in at last. There it is with its head on his shoulder, billing and cooing close up to his heart, with soft outstretched fluttering wings. This is what he has asked for every day and hour for eighteen years. This is what he pined after. Here it is — the summit, the end — the last page of the third volume. Good-by, Colonel — God bless you, honest William! — Farewell, dear Amelia — Grow green again, tender little parasite, round the rugged old oak to which you cling!

Perhaps it was compunction towards the kind and simple creature, who had been the first in life to defend her, perhaps it was a dislike to all such sentimental scenes, — but Rebecca, satisfied with her part of the transaction, never presented herself before Colonel Dobbin and the lady whom he married. "Particular business," she said, took her to Bruges, whither she went; and only Georgy and his uncle were present at the marriage ceremony. When it was over, and Georgy had rejoined his parents, Mrs. Becky returned (just for a few days) to comfort the solitary bachelor, Joseph Sedley. He preferred a continental life, he said, and declined to join in housekeeping with his sister and her husband.

Emmy was very glad in her heart to think that she had written to her husband before she read or knew of that letter of George's. "I knew it all along," William said; "but could I use that weapon against the poor fellow's memory? It was that which made me suffer so when you — "

"Never speak of that day again," Emmy cried out,

so contrite and humble, that William turned off the conversation, by his account of Glorvina and dear old Peggy O'Dowd, with whom he was sitting when the letter of recall reached him. "If you had n't sent for me," he added with a laugh, "who knows what Glorvina's name might be now?"

At present it is Glorvina Posky (now Mrs. Major Posky), she took him on the death of his first wife, having resolved never to marry out of the regiment. Lady O'Dowd is also so attached to it that, she says, if anything were to happen to Mick, bedad she 'd come back and marry some of 'em. But the Major-General is quite well, and lives in great splendor at O'Dowdstown, with a pack of beagles, and (with the exception of perhaps their neighbor, Hoggarty of Castle Hoggarty) he is the first man of his county. Her ladyship still dances jigs, and insisted on standing up with the Master of the Horse at the Lord Lieutenant's last ball. Both she and Glorvina declared that Dobbin had used the latter *sheamfully*, but Posky falling in, Glorvina was consoled, and a beautiful turban from Paris appeased the wrath of Lady O'Dowd.

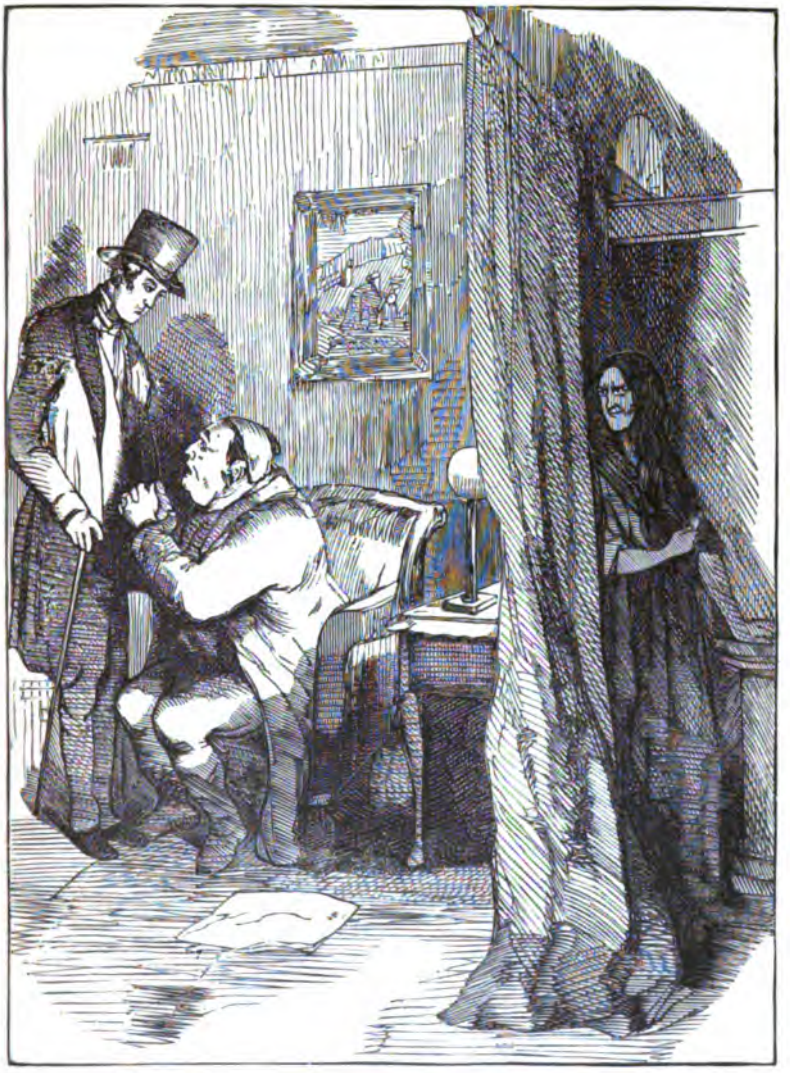
When Colonel Dobbin quitted the service, which he did immediately after his marriage, he rented a pretty little country place in Hampshire, not far from Queen's Crawley, where, after the passing of the Reform Bill, Sir Pitt and his family constantly resided now. All idea of a Peerage was out of the question, the Baronet's two seats in Parliament being lost. He was both out of pocket and out of spirits by that catastrophe, failed in his health, and prophesied the speedy ruin of the Empire.

Lady Jane and Mrs. Dobbin became great friends — there was a perpetual crossing of pony-chaises

between the Hall and the Evergreens, the Colonel's place (rented of his friend Major Ponto, who was abroad with his family). Her ladyship was godmother to Mrs. Dobbin's child, which bore her name, and was christened by the Rev. James Crawley, who succeeded his father in the living; and a pretty close friendship subsisted between the two lads, George and Rawdon, who hunted and shot together in the vacations, were both entered of the same College at Cambridge, and quarrelled with each other about Lady Jane's daughter, with whom they were both, of course, in love. A match between George and that young lady was long a favorite scheme of both the matrons, though I have heard that Miss Crawley herself inclined towards her cousin.

Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's name was never mentioned by either family. There were reasons why all should be silent regarding her. For wherever Mr. Joseph Sedley went, she travelled likewise; and that infatuated man seemed to be entirely her slave. The Colonel's lawyers informed him that his brother-in-law had effected a heavy insurance upon his life, whence it was probable that he had been raising money to discharge debts. He procured prolonged leave of absence from the East India House, and indeed his infirmities were daily increasing.

On hearing the news about the insurance, Amelia, in a good deal of alarm, entreated her husband to go to Brussels, where Jos then was, and inquire into the state of his affairs. The Colonel quitted home with reluctance (for he was deeply immersed in his "History of the Punjaub," which still occupies him, and much alarmed about his little daughter, whom he idolizes, and who was just recovering from the chicken-pox), and went to Brussels and found Jos living at one of



BECKY'S SECOND APPEARANCE IN THE CHARACTER OF CLYTEMNESTRA.

the enormous hotels in that city. Mrs. Crawley, who had her carriage, gave entertainments, and lived in a very genteel manner, occupied another suite of apartments in the same hotel.

The Colonel, of course, did not desire to see that lady, or even think proper to notify his arrival at Brussels, except privately to Jos by a message through his valet. Jos begged the Colonel to come and see him that night, when Mrs. Crawley would be at a *soirée*, and when they could meet *alone*. He found his brother-in-law in a condition of pitiable infirmity; and dreadfully afraid of Rebecca, though eager in his praises of her. She tended him through a series of unheard-of illnesses, with a fidelity most admirable. She had been a daughter to him. "But — but — oh, for God's sake, do come and live near me, and — and — see me sometimes," whimpered out the unfortunate man.

The Colonel's brow darkened at this. "We can't, Jos," he said. "Considering the circumstances, Amelia can't visit you."

"I swear to you — I swear to you on the Bible," gasped out Joseph, wanting to kiss the book, "that she is as innocent as a child, as spotless as your own wife."

"It may be so," said the Colonel, gloomily; "but Emmy can't come to you. Be a man, Jos: break off this disreputable connection. Come home to your family. We hear your affairs are involved."

"Involved!" cried Jos. "Who has told such calumnies? All my money is placed out most advantageously. Mrs. Crawley — that is — I mean, — it is laid out to the best interest."

"You are not in debt, then? Why did you insure your life?"

"I thought — a little present to her — in case anything happened; and you know my health is so delicate — common gratitude you know — and I intend to leave all my money to you — and I can spare it out of my income, indeed I can," cried out William's weak brother-in-law.

The Colonel besought Jos to fly at once — to go back to India, whither Mrs. Crawley could not follow him; to do anything to break off a connection which might have the most fatal consequences to him.

Jos clasped his hands, and cried, — "He would go back to India. He would do anything: only he must have time: they must n't say anything to Mrs. Crawley: — she 'd — she 'd kill me if she knew it. You don't know what a terrible woman she is," the poor wretch said.

"Then, why not come away with me?" said Dobbin in reply; but Jos had not the courage. "He would see Dobbin again in the morning; he must on no account say that he had been there. He must go now. Becky might come in." And Dobbin quitted him full of forebodings.

He never saw Jos more. Three months afterwards Joseph Sedley died at Aix-la-Chapelle. It was found that all his property had been muddled away in speculations, and was represented by valueless shares in different bubble companies. All his available assets were the two thousand pounds for which his life was insured, and which were left equally between his beloved "sister Amelia, wife of, etc., and his friend and invaluable attendant during sickness, Rebecca, wife of Lieutenant-Colonel Rawdon Crawley, C.B.," who was appointed administratrix.

The solicitor of the Insurance Company swore it was the blackest case that ever had come before him;

talked of sending a commission to Aix to examine into the death, and the Company refused payment of the policy. But Mrs., or Lady Crawley, as she styled herself, came to town at once (attended with her solicitors, Messrs. Burke, Thurtell, and Hayes, of Thavies Inn), and dared the Company to refuse the payment. They invited examination, they declared that she was the object of an infamous conspiracy, which had been pursuing her all through life, and triumphed finally. The money was paid, and her character established, but Colonel Dobbin sent back his share of the legacy to the Insurance Office, and rigidly declined to hold any communication with Rebecca.

She never was Lady Crawley, though she continued so to call herself. His Excellency Colonel Rawdon Crawley died of yellow fever at Coventry Island, most deeply beloved and deplored, and six weeks before the demise of his brother, Sir Pitt. The estate consequently devolved upon the present Sir Rawdon Crawley, Bart.

He, too, has declined to see his mother, to whom he makes a liberal allowance; and who, besides, appears to be very wealthy. The Baronet lives entirely at Queen's Crawley, with Lady Jane and her daughter; whilst Rebecca, Lady Crawley, chiefly hangs about Bath and Cheltenham, where a very strong party of excellent people consider her to be a most injured woman. She has her enemies. Who has not? Her life is her answer to them. She busies herself in works of piety. She goes to church, and never without a footman. Her name is in all the Charity Lists. The Destitute Orange-girl, the Neglected Washerwoman, the Distressed Muffin-man, find in her a fast and generous friend. She is always hav-

ing stalls at Fancy Fairs for the benefit of these hapless beings. Emmy, her children, and the Colonel, coming to London some time back, found themselves suddenly before her at one of these fairs. She cast down her eyes demurely and smiled as they started away from her; Emmy skurrying off on the arm of George (now grown a dashing young gentleman), and the Colonel seizing up his little Janey of whom he is fonder than of anything in the world — fonder even than of his "History of the Punjaub."

"Fonder than he is of me," Emmy thinks, with a sigh. But he never said a word to Amelia that was not kind and gentle; or thought of a want of hers that he did not try to gratify.

Ah! *Vanitas Vanitatum!* which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? or having it, is satisfied? — come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out.

THE END.

LOVEL THE WIDOWER.

LOVEL THE WIDOWER.

CHAPTER I.

THE BACHELOR OF BEAK STREET.

WHO shall be the hero of this tale? Not I who write it. I am but the Chorus of the Play. I make remarks on the conduct of the characters: I narrate their simple story. There is love and marriage in it: there is grief and disappointment: the scene is in the parlor, and the region beneath the parlor. No: it may be the parlor and kitchen, in this instance, are on the same level. There is no high life, unless, to be sure, you call a baronet's widow a lady in high life; and some ladies may be, while some certainly are not. I don't think there's a villain in the whole performance. There is an abominable selfish old woman, certainly; an old highway robber; an old sponger on other people's kindness; an old haunter of Bath and Cheltenham boarding-houses (about which how can I know anything, never having been in a boarding-house at Bath or Cheltenham in my life?); an old swindler of tradesmen, tyrant of servants, bully of the poor — who, to be sure, might do duty for a villain, but she considers herself as virtuous a woman as ever was born. The heroine is not faultless (ah! that will be a great relief to some folks, for many writers' good women are, you know, so *very* insipid). The

principal personages you may very likely think to be no better than a muff. But is many a respectable man of our acquaintance much better? and do muffs know that they are what they are, or, knowing it, are they unhappy? Do girls decline to marry one if he is rich? Do we refuse to dine with one? I listened to one at Church last Sunday, with all the women crying and sobbing; and, oh, dear me! how finely he preached! Don't we give him great credit for wisdom and eloquence in the House of Commons? Don't we give him important commands in the army? Can you, or can you not, point out one who has been made a peer? Does n't your wife call one in the moment any of the children are ill? Don't we read his dear poems, or even novels? Yes; perhaps even this one is read and written by — Well? *Quid rides?* Do you mean that I am painting a portrait which hangs before me every morning in the looking-glass when I am shaving? *Après?* Do you suppose that I suppose that I have not infirmities like my neighbors? Am I weak? It is notorious to all my friends there is a certain dish I can't resist: no, not if I have already eaten twice too much at dinner. So, dear sir, or madam, have *you* your weakness — *your* irresistible dish of temptation (or if you don't know it, your friends do). No, dear friend, the chances are that you and I are not people of the highest intellect, of the largest fortune, of the most ancient family, of the most consummate virtue, of the most faultless beauty in face and figure. We are no heroes nor angels; neither are we fiends from abodes unmentionable, black assassins, treacherous Iagos, familiar with stabbing and poison — murder our amusement, daggers our playthings, arsenic our daily bread, lies our conversation, and forgery our common handwriting. No,

we are not monsters of crime, or angels walking the earth — at least I know *one* of us who is n't, as can be shown any day at home if the knife won't cut or the mutton comes up raw. But we are not altogether brutal and unkind, and a few folks like us. Our poetry is not as good as Alfred Tennyson's but we can turn a couplet for Miss Fanny's album: our jokes are not always first-rate, but Mary and her mother smile very kindly when papa tells his story or makes his pun. We have many weaknesses, but we are not ruffians of crime. No more was my friend Lovel. On the contrary, he was as harmless and kindly a fellow as ever lived when I first knew him. At present, with his changed position, he is, perhaps, rather *fine* (and certainly, I am not asked to his *best* dinner-parties as I used to be, where you hardly see a commoner — but stay! I am advancing matters). At the time when this story begins, I say, Lovel had his faults — which of us has not? He had buried his wife, having notoriously been henpecked by her. How many men and brethren are like him! He had a good fortune — I wish I had as much — though I dare say many people are ten times as rich. He was a good-looking fellow enough; though that depends, ladies, upon whether you like a fair man or a dark one. He had a country house, but it was only at Putney. In fact, he was in business in the city, and being a hospitable man, and having three or four spare bed-rooms, some of his friends were always welcome at Shrublands, especially after Mrs. Lovel's death, who liked me pretty well at the period of her early marriage with my friend, but got to dislike me at last and to show me the cold shoulder. That is a joint I never could like (though I have known fellows who persist in dining off it year after year, who cling hold

of it, and refuse to be separated from it). I say, when Lovel's wife began to show me that she was tired of my company, I made myself scarce: used to pretend to be engaged when Fred faintly asked me to Shrublands; to accept his meek apologies, proposals to dine *en garçon* at Greenwich, the club, and so forth; and never visit upon him my wrath at his wife's indifference — for, after all, he had been my friend at many a pinch: he never stinted at "Harts's" or "Lovegrove's," and always made a point of having the wine I liked, never mind what the price was. As for his wife, there was, assuredly, no love lost between us — I thought her a lean, scraggy, lackadaisical, egotistical, consequential, insipid creature: and as for his mother-in-law, who stayed at Fred's as long and as often as her daughter would endure her, has any one who ever knew that notorious old Lady Baker at Bath, at Cheltenham, at Brighton, — wherever trumps and frumps were found together; wherever scandal was cackled; wherever fly-blown reputations were assembled, and dowagers with damaged titles trod over each other for the *pas;* — who, I say, ever had a good word for that old woman? What party was not bored where she appeared? What tradesman was not done with whom she dealt? I wish with all my heart I was about to narrate a story with a good mother-in-law for a character; but then you know, my dear madam, all good women in novels are insipid. This woman certainly was not. She was not only not insipid, but exceedingly bad-tasted. She had a foul, loud tongue, a stupid head, a bad temper, an immense pride and arrogance, an extravagant son, and very little money. Can I say much more of a woman than this? Aha! my good Lady Baker! I was a *mauvais sujet,* was I? — I was leading Fred into

smoking, drinking, and low bachelor habits, was I? I, his old friend, who have borrowed money from him any time these twenty years, was not fit company for you and your precious daughter? Indeed! *I* paid the money I borrowed from him like a man; but did *you* ever pay him, I should like to know? When Mrs. Lovel was in the first column of "The Times," *then* Fred and I used to go off to Greenwich and Blackwall, as I said; then his kind old heart was allowed to feel for his friend; *then* we could have the other bottle of claret without the appearance of Bedford and the coffee, which in Mrs. L.'s time used to be sent in to us before we could ring for a second bottle, although she and Lady Baker had had three glasses each out of the first. Three full glasses each, I give you my word! No, Madam, it was your turn to bully me once — now it is mine and I use it. No, you old catamaran, though you pretend you never read novels, some of your confounded good-natured friends will let you know of *this* one. Here you are, do you hear? Here you shall be shown up. And so I intend to show up *other* women and *other* men who have offended me. Is one to be subject to slights and scorn, and not have revenge? Kindnesses are easily forgotten; but injuries! — what worthy man does not keep *those* in mind?

Before entering upon the present narrative, may I take leave to inform a candid public that, though it is all true, there is not a word of truth in it; that though Lovel is alive and prosperous, and you very likely have met him, yet I defy you to point him out; that his wife (for he is Lovel the Widower no more) is not the lady you imagine her to be, when you say (as you will persist in doing), "Oh, that character is intended for Mrs. Thingamy, or was notoriously drawn

from Lady So-and-So. No. You are utterly mistaken. Why, even the advertising-puffers have almost given up that stale stratagem of announcing "REVELATIONS FROM HIGH LIFE.— The *beau monde* will be startled at recognizing the portraits of some of its brilliant leaders in Miss Wiggins's forthcoming *roman de société*." Or, "We suspect a certain ducal house will be puzzled to guess how the pitiless author of 'May Fair Mysteries' has become acquainted with (and exposed with a fearless hand) *certain family secrets* which were thought only to be known to a few of the very highest members of the aristocracy." No, I say; these silly baits to catch an unsuspecting public shall not be our arts. If you choose to occupy yourself with trying to ascertain if a certain cap fits one amongst ever so many thousand heads, you *may* possibly pop it on the right one: but the cap-maker will perish before he tells you; unless, of course, he has some private pique to avenge, or malice to wreak, upon some individual who can't by any possibility hit again; — *then*, indeed, he will come boldly forward and seize upon his victim — (a bishop, say, or a woman without coarse, quarrelsome male relatives, will be best) — and clap on him, or her, such a cap, with such ears, that all the world shall laugh at the poor wretch, shuddering, and blushing beet-root red, and whimpering deserved tears of rage and vexation at being made the common butt of society. Besides, I dine at Lovel's still; his company and cuisine are amongst the best in London. If they suspected I was taking them off, he and his wife would leave off inviting me. Would any man of a generous disposition lose such a valued friend for a joke, or be so foolish as to show him up in a story? All persons with a decent knowledge of the world will at once banish

the thought, as not merely base, but absurd. I am invited to his house one day next week; *vous concevez* I can't mention the very day, for then he would find me out — and of course there would be no more cards for his old friend. He would not like appearing, as it must be owned he does in this memoir, as a man of not very strong mind. He believes himself to be a most determined, resolute person. He is quick in speech, wears a fierce beard, speaks with asperity to his servants (who liken him to a — to that before-named sable or ermine contrivance, in which ladies insert their hands in winter), and takes his wife to task so smartly, that I believe she believes he believes he is the master of the house. "Elizabeth, my love, he must mean A, or B, or D," I fancy I hear Lovel say; and she says, "Yes; oh! it is certainly D, — his very image!" "D to a T," says Lovel (who is a neat wit). *She* may know that I mean to depict her husband in the above unpretending lines: but she will never let me know of her knowledge except by a little extra courtesy; except (may I make this pleasing exception?) by a few more invitations; except by a look of those unfathomable eyes (gracious goodness! to think she wore spectacles ever so long, and put a lid over them as it were!), into which, when you gaze sometimes, you may gaze so deep, and deep, and deep, that I defy you to plumb half-way down into their mystery.

When I was a young man, I had lodgings in Beak Street, Regent Street (I no more have lived in Beak Street than in Belgrave Square: but I choose to say so, and no gentleman will be so rude as to contradict another) — I had lodgings, I say, in Beak Street, Regent Street. Mrs. Prior was the landlady's name. She had seen better days — landladies frequently

have. Her husband — he could not be called the landlord, for Mrs. P. was manager of the place — had been, in happier times, captain or lieutenant in the militia; then of Diss, in Norfolk, of no profession; then of Norwich Castle, a prisoner for debt; then of Southampton Buildings, London, law-writer; then of the Bom-Retiro Caçadores, in the service of H. M. the Queen of Portugal, lieutenant and paymaster; then of Melina Place, St. George's Fields, etc. — I forbear to give the particulars of an existence which a legal biographer has traced step by step, and which has more than once been the subject of judicial investigation by certain commissioners in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Well, Prior, at this time, swimming out of a hundred shipwrecks, had clambered on to a lighter, as it were, and was clerk to a coal-merchant, by the river-side. "You conceive, sir," he would say, "my employment is only temporary — the fortune of war, the fortune of war!" He smattered words in not a few foreign languages. His person was profusely scented with tobacco. Bearded individuals, padding the muddy hoof in the neighboring Regent Street, would call sometimes of an evening, and ask for "the Captain." He was known at many neighboring billiard-tables, and, I imagine, not respected. You will not see enough of Captain Prior to be very weary of him and his coarse swagger, to be disgusted by his repeated requests for small money-loans, or to deplore his loss, which you will please to suppose has happened before the curtain of our present drama draws up. I think two people in the world were sorry for him: his wife, who still loved the memory of the handsome young man who had wooed and won her; his daughter Elizabeth, whom for the last few months of his life, and up to his fatal illness, he every even-

ing conducted to what he called her "academy." You are right. Elizabeth is the principal character in this story. When I knew her, a thin, freckled girl of fifteen, with a lean frock, and hair of a reddish hue, she used to borrow my books, and play on the First Floor's piano, when he was from home — Slumley his name was. He was editor of the "Swell," a newspaper then published: author of a great number of popular songs, a friend of several music-selling houses; and it was by Mr. Slumley's interest that Elizabeth was received as a pupil at what the family called "the academy."

Captain Prior then used to conduct his girl to the Academy, but she often had to conduct him home again. Having to wait about the premises for two, or three, or five hours sometimes, whilst Elizabeth was doing her lessons, he would naturally desire to shelter himself from the cold at some neighboring house of entertainment. Every Friday, a prize of a golden medal, nay, I believe sometimes of twenty-five silver medals, was awarded to Miss Bellenden and other young ladies for their good conduct and assiduity at this academy. Miss Bellenden gave her gold medal to her mother, only keeping five shillings for herself, with which the poor child bought gloves, shoes, and her humble articles of millinery.

Once or twice the Captain succeeded in intercepting that piece of gold, and I dare say treated some of his whiskered friends, the clinking trampers of the Quadrant pavement. He was a free-handed fellow when he had anybody's money in his pocket. It was owing to differences regarding the settlement of accounts that he quarrelled with the coal-merchant, his very last employer. Bessy, after yielding once or twice to his importunity, and trying to believe his solemn

promises of repayment, had strength of mind to refuse her father the pound which he would have taken. Her five shillings — her poor little slender pocket-money, the representative of her charities and kindnesses to the little brothers and sisters, of her little toilette ornaments, nay, necessities; of those well-mended gloves, of those oft-darned stockings, of those poor boots, which had to walk many a weary mile after midnight; of those little knickknacks, in the shape of brooch or bracelet, with which the poor child adorned her homely robe or sleeve — her poor five shillings, out of which Mary sometimes found a pair of shoes, or Tommy a flannel jacket, and little Bill a coach and horse — this wretched sum, this mite, which Bessy administered among so many poor — I very much fear her father sometimes confiscated. I charged the child with the fact, and she could not deny me. I vowed a tremendous vow, that if ever I heard of her giving Prior money again, I would quit the lodgings, and never give those children lollipop, nor pegtop, nor sixpence; nor the pungent marmalade, nor the biting gingerbread-nut, nor the theatre-characters, nor the paint-box to illuminate the same; nor the discarded clothes, which became smaller clothes upon the persons of little Tommy and little Bill, for whom Mrs. Prior, and Bessy, and the little maid, cut, clipped, altered, ironed, darned, mangled, with the greatest ingenuity. I say, considering what had passed between me and the Priors — considering those money transactions, and those clothes, and my kindness to the children — it was rather hard that my jam-pots were poached, and my brandy-bottles leaked. And then to frighten her brother with the story of the inexorable creditor — oh, Mrs. Prior! — oh, fie, Mrs. P.!

So Bessy went to her school in a shabby shawl, a faded bonnet, and a poor little lean dress flounced with the mud and dust of all weathers, whereas there were some other young ladies, fellow-pupils of her, who laid out their gold medals to much greater advantage. Miss Delamere, with her eighteen shillings a week (calling them "*silver medals*" was only my wit, you see), had twenty new bonnets, silk and satin dresses for all seasons, feathers in abundance, swans-down muffs and tippets, lovely pocket-handkerchiefs and trinkets, and many and many a half-crown mould of jelly, bottle of sherry, blanket, or what not, for a poor fellow-pupil in distress; and as for Miss Montanville, who had exactly the same sal — well, who had a scholarship of exactly the same value, viz. about fifty pounds yearly — she kept an elegant little cottage in the Regent's Park, a brougham with a horse all over brass harness, and a groom with a prodigious gold lace hat-band, who was treated with frightful contumely at the neighboring cabstand; an aunt or a mother, I don't know which (I hope it was only an aunt), always comfortably dressed, and who looked after Montanville: and she herself had bracelets, brooches, and velvet pelisses of the very richest description. But then Miss Montanville was a good economist. *She* was never known to help a poor friend in distress, or give a fainting brother and sister a crust or a glass of wine. She allowed ten shillings a week to her father, whose name was Boskinson, said to be a clerk to a chapel in Paddington; but she would never see him — no, not when he was in hospital where he was so ill; and though she certainly lent Miss Wilder thirteen pounds, she had Wilder arrested upon her promissory note for twenty-four, and sold up every stick of Wilder's furniture, so that

the whole academy cried shame! Well, an accident occurred to Miss Montanville, for which those may be sorry who choose. On the evening of the 26th of December, Eighteen hundred and something, when the conductors of the academy were giving their grand annual Christmas Pant — I should say examination of the academy pupils before their numerous friends, Montanville, who happened to be present, not in her brougham this time, but in an aerial chariot of splendor drawn by doves, fell off a rainbow, and through the roof of the Revolving Shrine of the Amaranthine Queen, thereby very nearly damaging Bellenden, who was occupying the shrine, attired in a light-blue spangled dress, waving a wand, and uttering some idiotic verses composed for her by the Professor of Literature attached to the academy. As for Montanville, let her go shrieking down that trap-door, break her leg, be taken home, and never more be character of ours. She never could speak. Her voice was as hoarse as a fishwoman's. Can that immense stout old box-keeper at the —— theatre, who limps up to ladies on the first tier, and offers that horrible footstool, which everybody stumbles over, and makes a clumsy curtsy, and looks so knowing and hard, as if she recognized an acquaintance in the splendid lady who enters the box — can that old female be the once brilliant Emily Montanville? I am told there are *no* lady box-keepers in the English theatres. This, I submit, is a proof of my consummate care and artifice in rescuing from a prurient curiosity the individual personages from whom the characters of the present story are taken. Montanville is *not* a box-opener. She *may*, under another name, keep a trinket-shop in the Burlington Arcade, for what you know: but this secret no torture shall induce me to divulge. Life has its

rises and its downfalls, and you have had yours, you hobbling old creature. Montanville indeed! Go thy ways! Here is a shilling for thee. (Thank you, sir.) Take away that confounded footstool, and never let us see thee more!

Now the fairy Amarantha was like a certain dear young lady of whom we have read in early youth. Up to twelve o'clock, attired in sparkling raiment, she leads the dance with the prince (Gradini known as Grady in his days of banishment at the T. R. Dublin). At supper, she takes her place by the prince's royal father (who is alive now, and still reigns occasionally, so that we will not mention his revered name). She makes believe to drink from the gilded pasteboard, and to eat of the mighty pudding. She smiles as the good old irascible monarch knocks the prime minister and the cooks about: she blazes in splendor: she beams with a thousand jewels, in comparison with which the Koh-i-noor is a wretched lustreless little pebble: she disappears in a chariot, such as a Lord Mayor never rode in: — and at midnight, who is that young woman tripping homeward through the wet streets in a battered bonnet, a cotton shawl, and a lean frock fringed with the dreary winter flounces?

Our Cinderella is up early in the morning: she does no little portion of the house-work: she dresses her sisters and brothers: she prepares papa's breakfast. On days when she has not to go to morning lessons at her academy, she helps with the dinner. Heaven help us! She has often brought mine when I have dined at home, and owns to having made that famous mutton-broth when I had a cold. Foreigners come to the house — professional gentlemen — to see Slumley on the first floor; exiled captains of Spain and Portugal, companions of the warrior her father. It is

surprising how she has learned their accents, and has picked up French, and Italian, too. And she played the piano in Mr. Slumley's room sometimes, as I have said; but refrained from that presently, and from visiting him altogether. I suspect he was not a man of principle. His paper used to make direful attacks upon individual reputations; and you would find theatre and opera people most curiously praised and assaulted in the "Swell." I recollect meeting him, several years after, in the lobby of the opera, in a very noisy frame of mind, when he heard a certain lady's carriage called, and cried out with exceeding strong language, which need not be accurately reported. "Look at that woman! Confound her! I made her, sir! Got her an engagement when the family was starving, sir! Did you see her, sir? She would n't even look at me!" Nor indeed was Mr. S. at that moment a very agreeable object to behold.

Then I remembered that there had been some quarrel with this man, when we lodged in Beak Street together. If difficulty there was, it was solved *ambulando*. He quitted the lodgings, leaving an excellent and costly piano as security for a heavy bill which he owed to Mrs. Prior, and the instrument was presently fetched away by the music-sellers, its owners. But regarding Mr. S——'s valuable biography, let us speak very gently. You see it is "an insult to literature" to say that there are disreputable and dishonest persons who write in newspapers.

Nothing, dear friend, escapes your penetration: if a joke is made in your company, you are down upon it instanter, and your smile rewards the wag who amuses you: so you knew at once, whilst I was talking of Elizabeth and her academy, that a theatre was meant, where the poor child danced for a guinea or five-and-

twenty shillings per week. Nay, she must have had not a little skill and merit to advance to the quarter of a hundred: for she was not pretty at this time, only a rough, tawny-haired filly of a girl, with great eyes. Dolphin, the manager, did not think much of her, and she passed before him in his regiment of Sea-nymphs, or Bayadères, or Fairies, or Mazurka maidens (with their fluttering lances and little scarlet slyboots!) scarcely more noticed than private Jones standing under arms in his company when his Royal Highness the Field-Marshal gallops by. There were no dramatic triumphs for Miss Bellenden: no bouquets were flung at her feet: no cunning Mephistopheles — the emissary of some philandering Faustus outside — corrupted her duenna, or brought her caskets of diamonds. Had there been any such admirer for Bellenden, Dolphin would not only not have been shocked, but he would very likely have raised her salary. As it was, though himself, I fear, a person of loose morals, he respected better things. "That Bellenden's a good hhonest gurl," he said to the present writer: "works hard: gives her money to her family: father a shy old cove. Very good family I hear they are!" and he passes on to some other of the innumerable subjects which engage a manager.

"Now, why should a poor lodging-house keeper make such a mighty secret of having a daughter earning an honest guinea by dancing at a theatre? Why persist in calling the theatre an academy? Why did Mrs. Prior speak of it as such, to me who knew what the truth was, and to whom Elizabeth herself made no mystery of her calling?

There are actions and events in its life over which decent Poverty often chooses to cast a veil that is not unbecoming wear. We can all, if we are minded, peer

through this poor flimsy screen: often there is no shame behind it: — only empty platters, poor scraps, and other threadbare evidence of want and cold. And who is called on to show his rags to the public, and cry out his hunger in the street? At this time (her character has developed itself not so amiably since), Mrs. Prior was outwardly respectable; and yet, as I have said, my groceries were consumed with remarkable rapidity; my wine and brandy bottles were all leaky, until they were excluded from air under a patent lock · — my Morel's raspberry jam, of which I was passionately fond, if exposed on the table for a few hours, was always eaten by the cat, or that wonderful little wretch of a maid-of-all-work, so active, yet so patient, so kind, so dirty, so obliging. Was it *the maid* who took those groceries? I have seen the "Gazza Ladra," and know that poor little maids are sometimes wrongfully accused; and besides, in my particular case, I own I don't care who the culprit was. At the year's end, a single man is not much poorer for this house-tax which he pays. One Sunday evening, being confined with a cold, and partaking of that mutton-broth which Elizabeth made so well, and which she brought me, I entreated her to bring from the cupboard, of which I gave her the key, a certain brandy-bottle. She saw my face when I looked at her: there was no mistaking its agony. There was scarce any brandy left: it had all leaked away: and it was Sunday, and no good brandy was to be bought that evening.

Elizabeth, I say, saw my grief. She put down the bottle, and she cried: she tried to prevent herself from doing so at first, but she fairly burst into tears.

"My dear — dear child," says I, seizing her hand, "you don't suppose I fancy you — "

"No — no!" she says, drawing the large hand over

her eyes. "No — no! but I saw it when you and Mr. Warrington last 'ad some. Oh! do have a patting lock!"

"A patent lock, my dear!" I remarked. "How odd that you, who have learned to pronounce Italian and French words so well, should make such strange slips in English! Your mother speaks well enough."

"She was born a lady. She was not sent to be a milliner's girl, as I was, and then among those noisy girls at that — oh! that *place!*" cries Bessy, in a sort of desperation, clinching her hand.

Here the bells of St. Beak's began to ring quite cheerily for evening service. I heard "Elizabeth!" cried out from the lower regions by Mrs. Prior's cracked voice. And the maiden went her way to church, which she and her mother never missed of a Sunday; and I dare say I slept just as well without the brandy-and-water.

Slumley being gone, Mrs. Prior came to me rather wistfully one day, and wanted to know whether I would object to Madame Bentivoglio, the opera-singer, having the first floor? This was too much, indeed! How was my work to go on with that woman practising all day and roaring underneath me? But, after sending away so good a customer, I could not refuse to lend the Priors a little more money; and Prior insisted upon treating me to a new stamp, and making out a new and handsome bill for an amount nearly twice as great as the last; which he had no doubt under heaven, and which he pledged his honor as an officer and a gentleman, that he would meet. Let me see: That was how many years ago? — Thirteen, fourteen, twenty? Never mind. My fair Elizabeth, I think if you saw your poor old father's signature now, you would pay it. I came upon it lately in an old box I

have n't opened these fifteen years, along with some letters written — never mind by whom — and an old glove that I used to set an absurd value by; and that emerald-green tabinet waistcoat which kind old Mrs. Macmanus gave me, and which I wore at the L—d L—t—nt's ball, Ph-n-x Park, Dublin, once, when I danced with *her* there! Lord! — Lord! It would no more meet round my waist now than round Daniel Lambert's. How we outgrow things!

But as I never presented this united bill of £43 odd (the first portion of £23, etc. was advanced by me in order to pay an execution out of the house) — as I never expected to have it paid any more than I did to be Lord Mayor of London, — I say it was a little hard that Mrs. Prior should write off to her brother (she writes a capital letter), blessing Providence that had given him a noble income, promising him the benefit of her prayers, in order that he should long live to enjoy his large salary, and informing him that an obdurate creditor, who shall be nameless (meaning me), who had Captain Prior *in his power* (as if, being in possession of that dingy scrawl, I should have known what to do with it), who held Mr. Prior's acceptance for £43 14*s.* 4*d.* due on the 3rd July (my bill), would infallibly bring their family to RUIN, unless a part of the money was paid up. When I went up to my old college, and called on Sargent, at Boniface Lodge, he treated me as civilly as if I had been an undergraduate; scarcely spoke to me in hall, where, of course, I dined at the Fellows' table; and only asked me to one of Mrs. Sargent's confounded tea-parties during the whole time of my stay. Now, it was by this man's entreaty that I went to lodge at Prior's; he talked to me after dinner one day, he hummed, he ha'd, he blushed, he prated in his pompous way, about an un-

fortunate sister in London — fatal early marriage — husband, Captain Prior, Knight of the Swan with Two Necks of Portugal, most distinguished officer, but imprudent speculator — advantageous lodgings in the centre of London, quiet, though near the clubs — if I was ill (I am a confirmed invalid), Mrs. Prior, his sister, would nurse me like a mother. So, in a word, I went to Prior's: I took the rooms: I was attracted by some children: Amelia Jane (that little dirty maid before mentioned) dragging a go-cart, containing a little dirty pair; another marching by them, carrying a fourth wellnigh as big as himself. These little folks, having threaded the mighty flood of Regent Street, debouched into the quiet creek of Beak Street, just as I happened to follow them. And the door at which the small caravan halted, — the very door I was in search of, — was opened by Elizabeth, then only just emerging from childhood, with tawny hair falling into her solemn eyes.

The aspect of these little people, which would have deterred many, happened to attract me. I am a lonely man. I may have been ill-treated by some one once, but that is neither here nor there. If I had had children of my own, I think I should have been good to them. I thought Prior a dreadful vulgar wretch, and his wife a scheming, greedy little woman. But the children amused me: and I took the rooms, liking to hear overhead in the morning the patter of their little feet. The person I mean has several; husband, judge in the West Indies. *Allons!* now you know how I came to live at Mrs. Prior's.

Though I am now a steady, a *confirmed* old bachelor (I shall call myself Mr. Batchelor, if you please, in this story; and there is some one far — far away who knows why I will NEVER take another title), I was a

gay young fellow enough once. I was not above the pleasures of youth: In fact, I learned quadrilles on purpose to dance with her that long vacation when I went to read with my young friend, Lord Viscount Poldoody at Dub — psha! Be still, thou foolish heart! Perhaps I misspent my time as an undergraduate. Perhaps I read too many novels, occupied myself too much with "elegant literature" (that used to be our phrase), and spoke too often at the Union, where I had a considerable reputation. But those fine words got me no college prizes: I missed my fellowship: was rather in disgrace with my relations afterwards, but had a small independence of my own, which I eked out by taking a few pupils for little-goes and the common degree. At length, a relation dying, and leaving me a further small income, I left the university, and came to reside in London.

Now, in my third year at college, there came to St. Boniface a young gentlemen, who was one of the few gentleman-pensioners of our society. His popularity speedily was great. A kindly and simple youth, he would have been liked, I dare say, even though he had been no richer than the rest of us; but this is certain, that flattery, worldliness, mammon-worship, are vices as well known to young as to old boys; and a rich lad at school or college has his followers, tuft-hunters, led-captains, little courts, just as much as any elderly millionnaire of Pall Mall, who gazes round his club to see whom he shall take home to dinner! while humble trencher-men wait anxiously, thinking — Ah! will he take me this time? or will he ask that abominable sneak and toady Henchman again? Well — well! this is an old story about parasites and flatterers. My dear good sir, I am not for a moment going to say that *you* ever were one; and I dare say

it was very base and mean of us to like a man chiefly on account of his money. "I know" — Fred Lovel used to say — "I know fellows come to my rooms because I have a large allowance, and plenty of my poor old governor's wine, and give good dinners: I am not deceived; but, at least, it is pleasanter to come to me and have good dinners, and good wine, than to go to Jack Highson's dreary tea and turnout, or to Ned Roper's abominable Oxbridge port." And so I admit at once that Lovel's parties *were* more agreeable than most men's in the college. Perhaps the goodness of the fare, by pleasing the guests, made them more pleasant. A dinner in hall, and a pewter plate is all very well, and I can say grace before it with all my heart; but a dinner with fish from London, game, and two or three nice little *entrées*, is better — and there was no better cook in the university than ours at St. Boniface, and ah me! there were appetites then, and digestions which rendered the good dinner doubly good.

Between me and young Lovel a friendship sprang up, which, I trust, even the publication of this story will not diminish. There is a period, immediately after the taking of his bachelor's degree, when many a university-man finds himself embarrassed. The tradesmen rather rudely press for a settlement of their accounts. Those prints we ordered *calidi juventâ;* those shirt-studs and pins which the jewellers would persist in thrusting into our artless bosoms; those fine coats we would insist on having for our books, as well as ourselves; all these have to be paid for by the graduate. And my father, who was then alive, refusing to meet these demands, under the — I own — just plea, that my allowance had been ample, and that my half-sisters ought not to be mulcted of

their slender portions in consequence of my extravagance, I should have been subject to very serious inconvenience — nay, possibly, to personal incarceration — had not Lovel, at the risk of rustication, rushed up to London to his mother (who then had *especial reasons* for being very gracious with her son), obtained a supply of money from her, and brought it to me at Mr. Shackell's horrible hotel, where I was lodged. He had tears in his kind eyes; he grasped my hand a hundred and hundred times as he flung the notes into my lap; and the recording tutor (Sargent was only tutor then), who was going to bring him up before the master for breach of discipline, dashed away a drop from his own lid, when, with a moving eloquence, I told what had happened, and blotted out the transaction with some particular old 1811 port, of which we freely partook in his private rooms that evening. By laborious instalments, I had the happiness to pay Lovel back. I took pupils as I said; I engaged in literary pursuits: I became connected with a literary periodical, and, I am ashamed to say, I imposed myself upon the public as a good classical scholar. I was not thought the less learned, when, my relative dying, I found myself in possession of a small independency; and my "Translations from the Greek," my "Poems by Beta," and my articles in the paper of which I was part proprietor for several years, have had their little success in their day.

Indeed at Oxbridge, if I did not obtain university honors, at least I showed literary tastes. I got the prize essay one year at Boniface, and plead guilty to having written essays, poems, and a tragedy. My college friends had a joke at my expense (a very small joke serves to amuse those port-wine-bibbing fogies, and keeps them laughing for ever so long a

time) — they are welcome, I say, to make merry at my charges — in respect of a certain bargain which I made on coming to London, and in which, had I been Moses Primrose purchasing green spectacles, I could scarcely have been more taken in. *My* Jenkinson was an old college acquaintance, whom I was idiot enough to imagine a respectable man: the fellow had a very smooth tongue, and sleek, sanctified exterior. He was rather a popular preacher, and used to cry a good deal in the pulpit. He, and a queer wine-merchant and bill-discounter, Sherrick by name, had somehow got possession of that neat little literary paper, the "Museum," which, perhaps, you remember; and this eligible literary property my friend Honeyman, with his wheedling tongue, induced me to purchase. I bear no malice: the fellow is in India now, where I trust he pays his butcher and baker. He was in dreadful straits for money when he sold me the "Museum." He began crying when I told him some short time afterwards that he was a swindler, and from behind his pocket-handkerchief sobbed a prayer that I should one day think better of him; whereas my remarks to the same effect produced an exactly contrary impression upon his accomplice, Sherrick, who burst out laughing in my face, and said, "The more fool you." Mr. Sherrick was right. He was a fool, without mistake, who had any money-dealing with him; and poor Honeyman was right, too; I don't think so badly of him as I did. A fellow so hardly pinched for money could not resist the temptation of extracting it from such a greenhorn. I dare say I gave myself airs as editor of that confounded "Museum," and proposed to educate the public taste, to diffuse morality and sound literature throughout the nation, and to pocket a liberal salary

in return for my services. I dare say I printed my own sonnets, my own tragedy, my own verses (to a Being who shall be nameless, but whose conduct has caused a faithful heart to bleed not a little). I dare say I wrote satirical articles, in which I piqued myself upon the fineness of my wit, and criticisms, got up for the nonce out of encyclopædias and biographical dictionaries; so that I would be actually astounded at my own knowledge. I dare say I made a gaby of myself to the world: pray, my good friend, hast thou never done likewise? If thou hast never been a fool, be sure thou wilt never be a wise man.

I think it was my brilliant *confrère* on the first floor (he had pecuniary transactions with Sherrick, and visited two or three of her Majesty's metropolitan prisons at that gentleman's suit) who first showed me how grievously I had been cheated in the newspaper matter. Slumley wrote for a paper printed at our office. The same boy often brought proofs to both of us — a little bit of a puny bright-eyed chap, who looked scarce twelve years old, when he was sixteen; who in wit was a man, when in stature he was a child, — like many other children of the poor.

This little Dick Bedford used to sit many hours asleep on my landing-place or Slumley's whilst we were preparing our invaluable compositions within our respective apartments. S—— was a good-natured reprobate, and gave the child of his meat and his drink. I used to like to help the little man from my breakfast, and see him enjoy the meal. As he sat, with his bag on his knees, his head sunk in sleep, his little high-lows scarce reaching the floor, Dick made a touching little picture. The whole house was fond of him. The tipsy Captain nodded him a welcome as he swaggered down stairs, stock, and coat, and waistcoat

in hand, to his worship's toilette in the back kitchen. The children and Dick were good friends; and Elizabeth patronized him, and talked with him now and again, in her grave way. You know Clancy the composer? — know him better, perhaps, under his name of Friederich Donner? Donner used to write music to Slumley's words, or *vice versâ;* and would come now and again to Beak Street, where he and his poet would try their joint work at the piano. At the sound of that music, little Dick's eyes used to kindle. "Oh, it's prime!" said the young enthusiast. And I will say, that good-natured miscreant of a Slumley not only gave the child pence, but tickets for the play, concerts, and so forth. Dick had a neat little suit of clothes at home; his mother made him a very nice little waistcoat out of my undergraduate's gown, and he and she, a decent woman, when in their best raiment, looked respectable enough for any theatre-pit in England.

Amongst other places of public amusement which he attended, Mr. Dick frequented the academy where Miss Bellenden danced, and whence poor Elizabeth Prior issued forth after midnight in her shabby frock. And once, the Captain, Elizabeth's father and protector, being unable to walk very accurately, and noisy and incoherent in his speech, so that the attention, of Messieurs of the police was directed towards him, Dick came up, placed Elizabeth and her father in a cab, paid the fare with his own money, and brought the whole party home in triumph, himself sitting on the box of the vehicle. I chanced to be coming home myself (from one of Mrs. Wateringham's elegant tea *soirées*, in Dorset Square), and reached my door just at the arrival of Dick and his caravan. "Here, cabby!" says Dick, handing out the fare, and

looking with his brightest eyes. It is pleasanter to look at that beaming little face, than at the Captain yonder, reeling into his house, supported by his daughter. Dick cried, Elizabeth told me, when, a week afterwards, she wanted to pay him back his shilling; and she said he was a strange child, that he was.

I revert to my friend Lovel. I was coaching Lovel for his degree (which, between ourselves, I think he never would have attained), when he suddenly announced to me, from Weymouth, where he was passing the vacation, his intention to quit the university, and to travel abroad. "Events have happened, dear friend," he wrote, "which will make my mother's home miserable to me (I little knew when I went to town about your business, what caused her *wonderful complaisance* to me). She would have broken my heart, Charles" (my Christian name is Charles), "but its wounds have found *a consoler!*"

Now, in this little chapter, there are some little mysteries propounded, upon which, were I not above any such artifice, I might easily leave the reader to ponder for a month.

1. Why did Mrs. Prior, at the lodgings, persist in calling the theatre at which her daughter danced the academy?

2. What were the special reasons why Mrs. Lovel should be very gracious with her son, and give him £150 as soon as he asked for the money?

3. Why was Fred Lovel's heart nearly broken? And 4. Who was his consoler?

I answer these at once, and without the slightest attempt at delay or circumlocution. 1. Mrs. Prior, who had repeatedly received money from her brother, John Erasmus Sargent, D.D., Master of St. Boniface Col-

lege, knew perfectly well that if the Master (whom she already pestered out of his life) heard that she had sent a niece of his on the stage, he would never give her another shilling.

2. The reason why Emma, widow of the late Adolphus Loeffel, of Whitechapel Road, sugar-baker, was so particularly gracious to her son, Adolphus Frederick Lovel, Esq., of St. Boniface College, Oxbridge, and principal partner in the house of Loeffel aforesaid, an infant, was that she, Emma, was about to contract a second marriage with the Rev. Samuel Bonnington.

3. Fred Lovel's heart was so very much broken by this intelligence, that he gave himself airs of Hamlet, dressed in black, wore his long fair hair over his eyes, and exhibited a hundred signs of grief and desperation: until —

4. Louisa (widow of the late Sir Popham Baker, of Bakerstown, co. Kilkenny, Baronet) induced Mr. Lovel to take a trip on the Rhine with her and Cecilia, fourth and only unmarried daughter of the aforesaid Sir Popham Baker, deceased.

My opinion of Cecilia I have candidly given in a previous page. I adhere to that opinion. I shall not repeat it. The subject is disagreeable to me, as the woman herself was in life. What Fred found in her to admire I cannot tell: lucky for us all that tastes, men, women, vary. You will never see her alive in this history. That is her picture, painted by the late Mr. Gandish. She stands fingering that harp with which she has often driven me half mad with her "Tara's Halls" and her "Poor Marianne." She used to bully Fred so, and be so rude to his guests, that in order to pacify her, he would meanly say, "Do, my love, let us have a little music!" and thrumpty —

thrumpty, off would go her gloves, and "Tara's Halls" would begin. "The harp that *once*," indeed! the accursed catgut scarce knew any other music, and "once" was a hundred times at least in *my* hearing. Then came the period when I was treated to the cold joint which I have mentioned; and, not liking it, I gave up going to Shrublands.

So, too, did my Lady Baker, but not of *her own free will*, mind you. *She* did not quit the premises because her reception was too cold, but because the house was made a great deal too hot for her. I remember Fred coming to me in high spirits, and describing to me, with no little humor, a great battle between Cecilia and Lady Baker, and her ladyship's defeat and flight. She fled, however, only as far as Putney village, where she formed again, as it were, and fortified herself in a lodging. Next day she made a desperate and feeble attack, presenting herself at Shrubland's lodge-gate, and threatening that she and sorrow would sit down before it; and that all the world should know how a daughter treated her mother. But the gate was locked, and Barnet, the gardener, appeared behind it, saying, "Since you *are* come, my lady, perhaps you will pay my missis the four-and-twenty shillings you borrowed of her." And he grinned at her through the bars, until she fled before him, cowering. Lovel paid the little forgotten account; the best four-and-twenty shillings he had ever laid out, he said.

Eight years passed away; during the last four of which I scarce saw my old friend, except at clubs and taverns, where we met privily, and renewed, not old warmth and hilarity, but old kindness. One winter he took his family abroad; Cecilia's health was delicate, Lovel told me, and the doctor had advised that

I AM REFERRED TO CECILIA.

she should spend a winter in the south. He did not stay with them: he had pressing affairs at home; he had embarked in many businesses besides the paternal sugar-bakery; was concerned in companies, a director of a joint-stock bank, a man in whose fire were many irons. A faithful governess was with the children; a faithful man and maid were in attendance on the invalid; and Lovel, adoring his wife, as he certainly did, yet supported her absence with great equanimity.

In the spring I was not a little scared to read amongst the deaths in the newspaper: — "At Naples, of scarlet fever, on the 25th ult., Cecilia, wife of Frederick Lovel, Esq., and daughter of the late Sir Popham Baker, Bart." I knew what my friend's grief would be. He had hurried abroad at the news of her illness; he did not reach Naples in time to receive the last words of his poor Cecilia.

Some months after the catastrophe, I had a note from Shrublands. Lovel wrote quite in the old affectionate tone. He begged his dear old friend to go to him, and console him in his solitude. Would I come to dinner that evening?

Of course I went off to him straightway. I found him in deep sables in the drawing-room with his children, and I confess I was not astonished to see my Lady Baker once more in that room.

"You seem surprised to see me here, Mr. Batchelor?" says her ladyship, with that grace and good-breeding which she generally exhibited; for if she accepted benefits, she took care to insult those from whom she received them.

"Indeed, no," said I, looking at Lovel, who piteously hung down his head. He had his little Cissy at his knee: he was sitting under the portrait of the defunct

musician, whose harp, now muffled in leather, stood dimly in the corner of the room.

"I am here not at my own wish, but from a feeling of duty towards that — departed — angel!" says Lady Baker, pointing to the picture.

"I am sure when Mamma was here, you were always quarrelling," says little Popham, with a scowl.

"This is the way those innocent children have been taught to regard me," cries grandmamma.

"Silence, Pop," says Papa, and don't be a rude boy."

"Is n't Pop a rude boy?" echoes Cissy.

"Silence, Pop," continues Papa, "or you must go up to Miss Prior."

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH MISS PRIOR IS KEPT AT THE DOOR.

Of course we all know who she was, the Miss Prior of Shrublands, whom papa and grandmamma called to the unruly children. Years had passed since I had shaken the Beak Street dust off my feet. The brass plate of "Prior" was removed from the once familiar door, and screwed, for what I can tell, on to the late reprobate owner's coffin. A little eruption of mushroom-formed brass knobs I saw on the door-post when I passed by it last week, and "Café des Ambassadeurs" was thereon inscribed, with three fly-blown blue teacups, a couple of coffee-pots of the well-known Britannia metal, and two freckled copies of the *Indépendance Belge* hanging over the window-blind. Were those their Excellencies the Ambassadors at the door, smoking cheroots? Pool and billiards were written on their countenances, their hats, their elbows. They may have been ambassadors down on their luck, as the phrase is. They were in disgrace, no doubt, at the court of her imperial majesty, Queen Fortune. Men as shabby have retrieved their disgraces ere now, washed their cloudy faces, strapped their dingy waistcoats with cordons, and stepped into fine carriages from quarters not a whit more reputable than the "Café des Ambassadeurs." If I lived in the Leicester Square neighborhood, and kept a café, I would always treat foreigners with respect. They may be billiard-markers now, or doing a little shady police business; but why should

they not afterwards be generals and great officers of state? Suppose that gentleman is at present a barber, with his tongs and stick of fixature for the mustaches, how do you know he has not his epaulettes and his *bâton de maréchal* in the same pouch? I see engraven on the second-floor bell, on my rooms, "Plugwell." Who can Plugwell be, whose feet now warm at the fire where I sat many a long evening? And this gentleman with the fur collar, the straggling beard, the frank and engaging leer, the somewhat husky voice, who is calling out on the doorstep, "Step in, and 'ave it done. Your correct likeness, only one shilling" — is he an ambassador too? Ah, no: he is only the *chargé d' affaires* of a photographer who lives up stairs: no doubt where the little ones used to be. Bless me! Photography was an infant, and in the nursery, too, when *we* lived in Beak Street.

Shall I own that, for old time's sake, I went up stairs, and "'ad it done" — that correct likeness, price one shilling. Would Some One (I have said, I think, that the party in question is well married in a distant island) like to have the thing, I wonder, and be reminded of a man whom she knew in life's prime, with brown curly locks, as she looked on the effigy of this elderly gentleman, with a forehead as bare as a billiard-ball?

As I went up and down that darkling stair, the ghosts of the Prior children peeped out from the banisters; the little faces smiled in the twilight: it may be wounds (of the heart) throbbed and bled again, — oh, how freshly and keenly! How infernally I have suffered behind that door in that room — I mean that one where Plugwell now lives. Confound Plugwell! I wonder what that woman thinks of me as she sees me shaking my fist at the door? Do you think me

mad, Madam? I don't care if you do. Do you think when I spoke anon of the ghosts of Prior's children, I mean that any of them are dead? None are, that I know of. A great hulking Bluecoat boy, with fluffy whiskers, spoke to me not long since, in an awful bass voice, and announced his name as "Gus Prior." And "How 's Elizabeth?" he added, nodding his bullet head. Elizabeth, indeed, you great vulgar boy! Elizabeth, — and, by the way, how long we have been keeping her waiting!

You see, as I beheld her, a heap of memories struck upon me, and I could not help chattering; when of course — and you are perfectly right, only you might just as well have left the observation alone: for I knew quite well what you were going to say — when I had much better have held my tongue. Elizabeth means a history to me. She came to me at a critical period of my life. Bleeding and wounded from the conduct of that other individual (by her present name of Mrs. O'D — her present *O'D*-ous name — I say, I will never — never call her) — desperately wounded and miserable on my return from a neighboring capital, I went back to my lodgings in Beak Street, and there there grew up a strange intimacy between me and my landlady's young daughter. I told her my story — indeed, I believe I told anybody who would listen. She seemed to compassionate me. She would come wistfully into my rooms, bringing me my gruel and things (I could scarcely bear to eat for a while after — after that affair to which I may have alluded before) — she used to come to me, and she used to pity me, and I used to tell her all, and to tell her over and over again. Days and days have I passed tearing my heart out in that second-floor room which answers to the name of Plugwell now. Afternoon after afternoon

have I spent there, and poured out my story of love and wrong to Elizabeth, showed her that waistcoat I told you of — that glove (her hand was n't so very small either) — her letters, those two or three vacuous, meaningless letters, with "My dear sir — Mamma hopes you will come to tea;" or, "If dear Mr. Batchelor *should* be riding in the Phœnix Park near the *Long Milestone*, about two, my sister and I will be in the car, and," etc.; or, "Oh, you kind man! the tickets" (she called it *tickuts* — by heaven! she did) "were too welcome, and the *bouquays* too lovely" (this word, I saw, had been operated on with a penknife. I found no faults, not even in her spelling — then); or, never mind what more. But more of this *puling*, of this *humbug*, of this *bad spelling*, of this infernal jilting, swindling, heartless hypocrisy (all her mother's doing, I own; for until he *got his place*, my rival was not so well received as I was) — more of this RUBBISH, I say, I showed Elizabeth, and she pitied me!

She used to come to me day after day, and I used to talk to her. She used not to say much. Perhaps she did not listen; but I did not care for that. On — and on — and on I would go with my prate about my passion, my wrongs, and despair; and untiring as my complaints were, still more constant was my little hearer's compassion. Mamma's shrill voice would come to put an end to our conversation, and she would rise up with an "Oh, bother!" and go away: but the next day the good girl was sure to come to me again, when we would have another repetition of our tragedy.

I dare say you are beginning to suppose (what, after all, is a very common case, and certainly *no conjurer* is wanted to make the guess) that out of all this crying and sentimentality, which a soft-hearted old

fool of a man poured out to a young girl — out of all this whimpering and pity, something which is said to be akin to pity might arise. But in this, my good madam, you are utterly wrong. Some people have the small-pox twice; *I do not.* In my case, if a heart is broke, it's broke: if a flower is withered, it's withered. If I choose to put my grief in a ridiculous light, why not? why do you suppose I am going to make a tragedy of such an old used-up, battered, stale, vulgar, trivial every-day subject as a jilt who plays with a man's passion, and laughs at him, and leaves him? Tragedy indeed! Oh, yes! poison — black-edged note-paper — Waterloo Bridge — one more unfortunate, and so forth! No: if she goes, let her go! — *si celeres quatit pennas,* I puff the what-d'ye-call-it away! But I'll have no *tragedy,* mind you.

Well, it must be confessed that a man desperately in love (as I fear I must own I then was, and a good deal cut up by Glorvina's conduct) is a most selfish being: whilst women are so soft and unselfish that they can forget or disguise their own sorrows for a while, whilst they minister to a friend in affliction. I did not see, though I talked with her daily, on my return from that accursed Dublin, that my little Elizabeth was pale and *distraite,* and sad, and silent. She would sit quite dumb whilst I chattered, her hands between her knees, or draw one of them over her eyes. She would say, "Oh, yes! Poor fellow — poor fellow!" now and again, as giving a melancholy confirmation of my dismal stories; but mostly she remained quiet, her head drooping towards the ground, a hand to her chin, her feet to the fender.

I was one day harping on the usual string. I was telling Elizabeth how, after presents had been accepted, after letters had passed between us (if her

scrawl could be called letters, if my impassioned song could be so construed), after everything but the actual word had passed our lips — I was telling Elizabeth how, on one accursed day, Glorvina's mother greeted me on my arrival in M-rr-n Square, by saying, "Dear, dear Mr. Batchelor, we look on you quite as one of the family! Congratulate me — congratulate my child! Dear Tom has got his appointment as Recorder of Tobago; and it is to be a match between him and his cousin Glory."

"His cousin *What!*" I shriek with a maniac laugh.

"My poor Glorvina! Sure the children have been fond of each other ever since they could speak. I knew your kind heart would be the first to rejoice in their happiness."

And so, say I — ending the story — I, who thought myself loved, was left without a pang of pity: I, who could mention a hundred reasons why I thought Glorvina well disposed to me, was told she regarded me as an *uncle!* Were her letters such as nieces write? Who ever heard of an uncle walking round Merrion Square for hours of a rainy night, and looking up to a bed-room window, because his *niece*, forsooth, was behind it? I had set my whole heart on the cast, and this was the return I got for it. For months she cajoles me — her eyes follow me, her cursed smiles welcome and fascinate me, and at a moment, at the beck of another — she laughs at me and leaves me!

At this, my little pale Elizabeth, still hanging down, cries, "Oh, the villain! the villain!" and sobs so that you might have thought her little heart would break.

"Nay," said I, "my dear, Mr. O'Dowd is no villain. His uncle, Sir Hector, was as gallant an old officer as any in the service. His aunt was a Malloy, of Mol-

loystown, and they are of excellent family, though, I believe, of embarrassed circumstances; and young Tom —"

"*Tom?*" cries Elizabeth, with a pale, bewildered look. "*His name was n't Tom*, dear Mr. Batchelor; *his name was Woo-woo-illiam!*" and the tears begin again.

Ah, my child! my child! my poor young creature! and you, too, have felt the infernal stroke. You, too, have passed the tossing nights of pain — have heard the dreary hours toll — have looked at the cheerless sunrise with your blank sleepless eyes — have woke out of dreams, mayhap, in which the beloved one was smiling on you, whispering love-words — oh! how sweet and fondly remembered! What! — your heart has been robbed, too, and your treasury is rifled and empty! — poor girl! And I looked in that sad face, and saw no grief there! You could do your little sweet endeavor to soothe my wounded heart, and I never saw yours was bleeding! Did you suffer more than I did, my poor little maid? I hope not. Are you so young, and is all the flower of life blighted for you? the cup without savor, the sun blotted, or almost invisible over your head? The truth came on me all at once: I felt ashamed that my own selfish grief should have made me blind to hers.

"What!" said I, "my poor child? Was it —?" and I pointed with my finger *downwards*.

She nodded her poor head.

I knew it was the lodger who had taken the first floor shortly after Slumley's departure. He was an officer in the Bombay Army. He had had the lodgings for three months. He had sailed for India shortly before I returned home from Dublin.

Elizabeth is waiting all this time — shall she come

in? No, not yet. I have still a little more to say about the Priors.

You understand that she was no longer Miss Prior of Beak Street, and that mansion, even at the time of which I write, had been long handed over to other tenants. The Captain dead, his widow with many tears pressed me to remain with her, and I did, never having been able to resist that kind of appeal. Her statements regarding her affairs were not strictly correct. — Are not women sometimes incorrect about money matters? — A landlord (not unjustly indignant) quickly handed over the mansion in Beak Street to other tenants. The Queen's taxes swooped down on poor Mrs. Prior's scanty furniture — on hers? — on mine likewise: on my neatly bound college books, emblazoned with the effigy of Bonifacius, our patron, and of Bishop Budgeon, our founder; on my elegant Raphael Morghen prints, purchased in undergraduate days — (ye Powers! what *did* make us boys go tick for fifteen-guinea proofs of Raphael, Dying Stags, Duke of Wellington Banquets, and the like?); my harmonium, at which SOME ONE has warbled songs of my composition — (I mean the words, artfully describing my passion, my hopes, or my despair); on my rich set of Bohemian glass, bought on the Zeil, Frankfort O. M.; on my picture of my father, the late Captain Batchelor (Hoppner), R. N., in white ducks, and a telescope, pointing, of course, to a tempest, in the midst of which was a naval engagement; on my poor mother's miniature, by old Adam Buck, in pencil and pink, with no waist to speak of at all; my tea and cream pots (bullion), with a hundred such fond knick-knacks as decorate the chamber of a lonely man. I found all these household treasures in possession of the myrmidons of the law, and had to pay the Priors'

taxes with this hand, before I could be redintegrated in my own property. Mrs. Prior could only pay me back with a widow's tears and blessings (Prior having quitted a world where he had long ceased to be of use or ornament). The tears and blessings, I say, she offered me freely, and they were all very well. But why go on tampering with the tea-box, Madam? Why put your finger — your finger? — your whole paw — in the jam-pot? And it is a horrible fact that the wine and spirit bottles were just as leaky after Prior's decease as they had been during his disreputable lifetime. One afternoon, having a sudden occasion to return to my lodgings, I found my wretched landlady in the very act of marauding sherry. She gave an hysterical laugh, and then burst into tears. She declared that since her poor Prior's death she hardly knew what she said or did. She may have been incoherent; she was; but she certainly spoke truth on *this* occasion.

I am speaking lightly — flippantly, if you please — about this old Mrs. Prior, with her hard, eager smile, her wizened face, her frowning look, her cruel voice; and yet, goodness knows, I could, if I liked, be serious as a sermonizer. Why, this woman had once red cheeks, and was well-looking enough, and told few lies, and stole no sherry, and felt the tender passions of the heart, and I dare say kissed the weak old beneficed clergyman her father very fondly and remorsefully that night when she took leave of him to skip round to the back garden-gate and run away with Mr. Prior. Maternal instinct she had, for she nursed her young as best she could from her lean breast, and went about hungrily, robbing and pilfering for them. On Sundays she furbished up that threadbare black silk gown and bonnet, ironed the

collar, and clung desperately to church. She had a feeble pencil-drawing of the vicarage in Dorsetshire, and *silhouettes* of her father and mother, which were hung up in the lodgings wherever she went. She migrated much: wherever she went she fastened on the gown of the clergyman of the parish; spoke of her dear father the vicar, of her wealthy and gifted brother the Master of Boniface, with a reticence which implied that Dr. Sargent might do more for his poor sister and her family, if he would. She plumed herself (oh! those poor moulting old plumes!) upon belonging to the clergy; had read a good deal of good sound old-fashioned theology in early life, and wrote a noble hand, in which she had been used to copy her father's sermons. She used to put cases of conscience, to present her humble duty to the Rev. Mr. Green, and ask explanation of such and such a passage of his admirable sermon, and bring the subject round so as to be reminded of certain quotations of Hooker, Beveridge, Jeremy Taylor. I think she had an old commonplace book with a score of these extracts, and she worked them in very amusingly and dexterously into her conversation. Green would be interested: perhaps pretty young Mrs. Green would call, secretly rather shocked at the coldness of old Dr. Brown, the rector, about Mrs. Prior. Between Green and Mrs. Prior money transactions would ensue: Mrs. Green's visits would cease: Mrs. Prior was an expensive woman to know. I remember Pye of Maudlin, just before he "went over," was perpetually in Mrs. Prior's back parlor with little books, pictures, medals, etc., etc., — you know. They called poor Jack a Jesuit at Oxbridge; but one year at Rome I met him (with a half-crown shaved out of his head, and a hat as big as Don Basilio's); and he said, "My

dear Batchelor, do you know that person at your lodgings? I think she was an artful creature! She borrowed fourteen pounds of me, and I forget how much of — seven, I think — of Barfoot, of Corpus, just — just before we were received. And I believe she absolutely got another loan from Pummel, to be able to get out of the hands of us Jesuits. Are you going to hear the Cardinal? Do — do go and hear him — everybody does: it's the most fashionable thing in Rome." And from this I opine that there are sly-boots in other communions besides that of Rome.

Now Mamma Prior had not been unaware of the love-passages between her daughter and the fugitive Bombay captain. Like Elizabeth, she called Captain Walkingham "villain" readily enough; but, if I know woman's nature in the least (and I don't), the old schemer had thrown her daughter only too frequently in the officer's way, had done no small portion of the flirting herself, had allowed poor Bessy to receive presents from Captain Walkingham, and had been the manager and directress of much of the mischief which ensued. You see, in this humble class of life, unprincipled mothers *will* coax and wheedle and cajole gentlemen whom they suppose to be eligible, in order to procure an establishment for their darling children! What the Prioress did was done from the best motives of course. "Never — never did the monster see Bessy without me, or one or two of her brothers and sisters, and Jack and dear Ellen are as sharp children as any in England!" protested the indignant Mrs. Prior to me; "and if one of my boys had been grown up, Walkingham never would have dared to act as he did — the unprincipled wretch! My poor husband would have punished the villain as he deserved; but what could he do in his shattered

state of health? Oh! you men, — you men, Mr. Batchelor! how *unprincipled* you are!"

"Why, my good Mrs. Prior," said I, "you let Elizabeth come to my room often enough."

"To have the conversation of her uncle's friend, of an educated man, of a man so much older than herself! Of course, dear sir! Would not a mother wish every advantage for her child? and whom could I trust, if not you, who have ever been such a friend to me and mine?" asks Mrs. Prior, wiping her dry eyes with the corner of her handkerchief, as she stands by my fire, my monthly bills in hand, — written in her neat old-fashioned writing, and calculated with that prodigal liberality which she always exercised in compiling the little accounts between us. "Why, bless me!" says my cousin, little Mrs. Skinner, coming to see me once when I was unwell, and examining one of the just-mentioned documents, — "bless me! Charles, you consume more tea than all my family, though we are seven in the parlor, and as much sugar and butter, — well, it's no wonder you are bilious!"

"But then, my dear, I like my tea so *very* strong," said I; "and you take yours uncommonly mild. I have remarked it at your parties."

"It's a shame that a man should be robbed so," cried Mrs. S.

"How kind it is of you to cry thieves, Flora!" I reply.

"It's my duty, Charles!" exclaims my cousin. "And I should like to know who that great, tall, gawky, red-haired girl in the passage is!"

Ah me! the name of the only woman who ever had possession of this heart was not Elizabeth; though I own I did think at one time that my little schemer

of a landlady would not have objected if I had proposed to make Miss Prior Mrs. Batchelor. And it is not only the poor and needy who have this mania, but the rich, too. In the very highest circles, as I am informed by the best authorities, this match-making goes on. Ah woman — woman! — ah wedded wife! — ah fond mother of fair daughters! how strange thy passion is to add to thy titles that of mother-in-law! I am told, when you have got the title, it is often but a bitterness and a disappointment. Very likely the son-in-law is rude to you, the coarse, ungrateful brute! and very possibly the daughter rebels, the thankless serpent! And yet you will go on scheming: and having met only with disappointment from Louisa and her husband, you will try and get one for Jemima, and Maria, and down even to little Toddles coming out of the nursery in her red shoes! When you see her with little Tommy, your neighbor's child, fighting over the same Noah's ark, or clambering on the same rocking-horse, I make no doubt, in your fond silly head, you are thinking, "Will those little people meet some twenty years hence?" And you give Tommy a very large piece of cake, and have a fine present for him on the Christmas tree — you know you do, though he is but a rude, noisy child, and has already beaten Toddles, and taken her doll away from her, and made her cry. I remember, when I myself was suffering from the conduct of a young woman in — in a capital which is distinguished by a viceregal court — and from *her* heartlessness, as well as that of her relative, who I once thought would be *my* mother-in-law — shrieking out to a friend who happened to be spouting some lines from Tennyson's "Ulysses:" — "By George! Warrington, I have no doubt that when the young sirens set their green caps

at the old Greek captain and his crew, waving and beckoning him with their white arms and glancing smiles, and wheedling him with their sweetest pipes — I make no doubt, sir, that *the mother sirens* were behind the rocks (with their dyed fronts and cheeks painted, so as to resist water), and calling out — 'Now, Halcyone, my child, that air from the "Pirata!" Now, Glaukopis, dear, look well at that old gentleman at the helm! Bathykolpos, love, there's a young sailor on the maintop, who will tumble right down into your lap if you beckon him!' And so on — and so on." And I laughed a wild shriek of despair. For I, too, have been on the dangerous island, and come away thence, mad, furious, wanting a strait-waistcoat.

And so, when a white-armed siren, named Glorvina, was bedevilling *me* with her all too tempting ogling and singing, I did not see at the time, but *now* I know, that her artful mother was egging that artful child on.

How, when the Captain died, bailiffs and executions took possession of his premises, I have told in a previous page, nor do I care to enlarge much upon the odious theme. I think the bailiffs were on the premises before Prior's exit; but he did not know of their presence. If I had to buy them out, 't was no great matter: only I say it *was* hard of Mrs. Prior to represent me in the character of Shylock to the Master of Boniface. Well — well! I suppose there are other gentlemen besides Mr. Charles Batchelor who have been misrepresented in this life. Sargent and I made up matters afterwards, and Miss Bessy was the cause of our coming together again. "Upon my word, my dear Batchelor," says he one Christmas, when I went up to the old college, "I did not know how

much my — ahem! — my family was obliged to you! My — ahem! — niece, Miss Prior, has informed me of various acts of — ahem! — generosity which you showed to my poor sister, and her still more wretched husband. You got my second — ahem! — nephew — pardon me if I forget his Christian name — into the what-d'-you-call-'em — Bluecoat School; you have been, on various occasions, of considerable pecuniary service to my sister's family. A man need not take high university honors to have a good — ahem! — heart; and, upon my word, Batchelor, I and my — ahem! — wife are sincerely obliged to you."

"I tell you what, Master," said I, "there *is* a point upon which you ought really to be obliged to me, and in which I have been the means of putting money into your pocket, too."

"I confess I fail to comprehend you," says the Master, with his grandest air.

"I have got you and Mrs. Sargent a very good governess for your children, at the very smallest remuneration," say I.

"Do you know the charges that unhappy sister of mine and her family have put me to already?" says the Master, turning as red as his hood.

"They have formed the frequent subject of your conversation," I replied. "You have had Bessy as a governess —"

"A nursery governess — she has learned Latin and a great deal more since she has been in my house!" cries the Master.

"A nursery governess at the wages of a housemaid," I continued, as bold as Corinthian brass.

"Does my niece, does my — ahem! — children's governess, complain of my treatment in my college?" cries the Master.

"My dear Master," I asked, "you don't suppose I would have listened to her complaints, or, at any rate, have repeated them, until now?"

"And why now, Batchelor, I should like to know?" says the Master, pacing up and down his study in a fume, under the portraits of Holy Bonifacius, Bishop Budgeon, and all the defunct bigwigs of the college. "And why now, Batchelor, I should like to know?" says he.

"Because — though after staying with you for three years, and having improved herself greatly, as every woman must in your society, my dear Master, Miss Prior is worth at least fifty guineas a year more than you give her — I would not have had her speak until she had found a better place."

"You mean to say she proposes to go away?"

"A wealthy friend of mine, who was a member of our college by the way, wants a nursery governess, and I have recommended Miss Prior to him, at seventy guineas a year."

"And pray who's the member of my college who will give my niece seventy guineas?" asks the Master, fiercely.

"You remember Lovel, the gentleman-pensioner?"

"The sugar-baking man — the man who took you out of ja—?"

"One good turn deserves another," says I, hastily. "I have done as much for some of your family, Sargent!"

The red Master, who had been rustling up and down his study in his gown and bands, stopped in his walk as if I had struck him. He looked at me. He turned redder than ever. He drew his hand over his eyes. "Batchelor," says he, "I ask your pardon. It was I who forgot myself — may Heaven forgive me!

— forgot how good you have been to my family, to my — ahem! — *humble* family, and — and how devoutly thankful I ought to be for the protection which they have found in you." His voice quite fell as he spoke: and of course any little wrath which I might have felt was disarmed before his contrition. We parted the best friends. He not only shook hands with me at the study-door, but he actually followed me to the hall-door, and shook hands at his lodge-porch, *sub Jove*, in the quadrangle. Huckles, the tutor (Highlow Huckles we used to call him in our time), and Botts (Trumperian professor), who happened to be passing through the court at the time, stood aghast as they witnessed the phenomenon.

"I say, Batchelor," asks Huckles, "have you been made a marquis by any chance?"

"Why a marquis, Huckles?" I ask.

"Sargent never comes to his lodge-door with any man under a marquis," said Huckles, in a low whisper.

"Or a pretty woman," says that Botts (he *will* have his joke). "Batchelor, my elderly Tiresias, are you turned into a lovely young lady *par hasard?*"

"Get along, you absurd Trumperian professor!" say I. But the circumstance was the talk not only in Compotation Room that evening over our wine, but of the whole college. And further, events happened which made each man look at his neighbor with wonder. For that whole term Sargent did not ask our nobleman Lord Sackville (Lord Wigmore's son) to the lodge. (Lord W.'s father, you know, Duff, was baker to the college.) For that whole term he was rude but twice to Perks, the junior tutor, and then only in a very mild way: and what is more, he gave his niece a present of a gown, of his blessing, of a

kiss, and a high character. when she went away; — and promised to put one of her young brothers to school — which promise, I need not say, he faithfully kept: for he has good principles, Sargent has. He is rude: he is ill-bred: he is *bumptious* beyond almost any man I ever knew; he is spoiled not a little by prosperity; — but he is magnanimous: he can own that he has been in the wrong; and oh me! what a quantity of Greek he knows!

Although my late friend the Captain never seemed to do aught but spend the family money, his disreputable presence somehow acted for good in the household. "My dear husband kept our family together," Mrs. Prior said, shaking her lean head under her meagre widow's cap. "Heaven knows how I shall provide for these lambs now he is gone." Indeed, it was not until after the death of that tipsy shepherd that the wolves of the law came down upon the lambs — myself included, who have passed the age of lambhood and mint sauce a long time. They came down upon our fold in Beak Street, I say, and ravaged it. What was I to do? Could I leave that widow and children in their distress? I was not ignorant of misfortune, and knew how to succor the miserable. Nay, I think, the little excitement attendant upon the seizure of my goods, etc., the insolvent vulgarity of the low persons in possession — with one of whom I was very near coming to a personal encounter — and other incidents which occurred in the bereft household, served to rouse me, and dissipate some of the languor and misery under which I was suffering in consequence of Miss Mulligan's conduct to me. I know I took the late Captain to his final abode. My good friends the printers of the "Museum" took one of his boys into their counting-house. A blue coat and a

pair of yellow stockings were procured for Augustus; and seeing the Master's children walking about in Boniface gardens with a glum-looking old wretch of a nurse, I bethought me of proposing to him to take his niece Miss Prior — and, Heaven be good to me! never said one word to her uncle about Miss Bellenden and the Academy. I dare say I drew a number of long bows about her. I managed about the bad grammar pretty well, by lamenting that Elizabeth's poor mother had been forced to allow the girl to keep company with ill-educated people: and added, that she could not fail to mend her English in the house of one of the most distinguished scholars in Europe, and one of the best-bred women. I did say so, upon my word, looking that half-bred, stuck-up Mrs. Sargent gravely in the face; and I humbly trust, if that bouncer has been registered against me, the Recording Angel will be pleased to consider that the motive was good, though the statement was unjustifiable. But I don't think it was the compliment: I think it was the temptation of getting a governess for next to nothing that operated upon Madam Sargent. And so Bessy went to her aunt, partook of the bread of dependence, and drank of the cup of humiliation, and ate the pie of humility, and brought up her odious little cousins to the best of her small power, and bowed the head of hypocrisy before the don her uncle, and the pompous little upstart her aunt. *She* the best-bred woman in England, indeed! She, the little vain skinflint!

Bessy's mother was not a little loath to part with the fifty pounds a year which the child brought home from the Academy; but her departure thence was inevitable. Some quarrel had taken place there, about which the girl did not care to talk. Some rudeness had been offered to Miss Bellenden, to which Miss

Prior was determined not to submit: or was it that she wanted to go away from the scenes of her own misery, and to try and forget that Indian captain? Come, fellow-sufferer! Come, child of misfortune, come hither! Here is an old bachelor who will weep with thee tear for tear!

I protest here is Miss Prior coming into the room at last. A pale face, a tawny head of hair combed back, under a black cap: a pair of blue spectacles, as I live! a tight mourning dress, buttoned up to her white throat; a head hung meekly down: such is Miss Prior. She takes my hand when I offer it. She drops me a demure little curtsy, and answers my many questions with humble monosyllabic replies. She appeals constantly to Lady Baker for instruction, or for confirmation of her statements. What! have six years of slavery so changed the frank daring young girl whom I remember in Beak Street? She is taller and stouter than she was. She is awkward and high-shouldered, but surely she has a very fine figure.

"Will Miss Cissy and Master Popham have their teas here or in the schoolroom?" asks Bedford, the butler, of his master. Miss Prior looks appealingly to Lady Baker.

"In the sch —" Lady Baker is beginning.

"Here — here!" bawl out the children. "Much better fun down here: and you'll send us out some fruit and things from dinner, Papa!" cries Cissy.

"It's time to dress for dinner," says her ladyship.

"Has the first bell rung?" asks Lovel.

"Yes, the first bell has rung, and grandmamma must go, for it always takes her a precious long time to dress for dinner!" cries Pop. And, indeed, on looking at Lady Baker, the connoisseur might perceive that her ladyship was a highly composite person,

whose charms required very much care and arrangement. There are some cracked old houses where the painters and plumbers and puttyers are always at work.

"Have the goodness to ring the bell!" she says, in a majestic manner, to Miss Prior, though I think Lady Baker herself was nearest.

I sprang towards the bell myself, and my hand meets Elizabeth's there, who was obeying her ladyship's summons, and who retreats, making me the demurest curtsy. At the summons, enter Bedford the butler (he was an old friend of mine too) and young Buttons, the page under that butler.

Lady Baker points to a heap of articles on a table, and says to Bedford: "If you please, Bedford, tell my man to give those things to Pincott, my maid, to be taken to my room."

"Shall not I take them up, dear Lady Baker?" says Miss Prior.

But Bedford, looking at his subordinate, says: "Thomas! tell Bulkeley, her ladyship's man, to take her ladyship's things, and give them to her ladyship's maid." There was a tone of sarcasm, even of parody, in Monsieur Bedford's voice; but his manner was profoundly grave and respectful. Drawing up her person, and making a motion, I don't know whether of politeness or defiance, exit Lady Baker, followed by page, bearing bandboxes, shawls, paper parcels, parasols — I know not what. Dear Popham stands on his head as grandmamma leaves the room. "Don't be vulgar!" cries little Cissy (the dear child is always acting as a little Mentor to her brother). "I shall, if I like," says Pop; and he makes faces at her.

"You know your room, Batch?" asks the master of the house.

"Mr. Batchelor's old room — always has the blue room," says Bedford, looking very kindly at me.

"Give us," cries Lovel, "a bottle of that Sau—"

"—terne Mr. Batchelor used to like. Château Yquen. All right!" says Mr. Bedford. "How will you have the turbot done you brought down? — Dutch sauce? — Make lobster into salad? Mr. Bonnington likes lobster-salad," says Bedford. Pop is winding up the butler's back at this time. It is evident Mr. Bedford is a privileged person in the family. As he had entered it on my nomination, several years ago, and had been ever since the faithful valet, butler, and major-domo of Lovel, Bedford and I were always good friends when we met.

"By the way, Bedford, why was n't the barouche sent for me to the bridge?" cries Lovel. "I had to walk all the way home, with a bat and stumps for Pop, with the basket of fish, and that bandbox with my lady's —"

"He — he!" grins Bedford.

"'He — he!' Confound you, why do you stand grinning there? Why did n't I have the carriage, I say?" bawls the master of the house.

"*You* know, sir," says Bedford. "*She* had the carriage." And he indicated the door through which Lady Baker had just retreated.

"Then why did n't I have the phaeton?" asks Bedford's master.

"Your ma and Mr. Bonnington had the phaeton."

"And why should n't they, pray? Mr. Bonnington is lame: I 'm at my business all day. I should like to know why they *should n't* have the phaeton?" says Lovel, appealing to me. As we had been sitting talking together previous to Miss Prior's appearance, Lady Baker had said to Lovel, "Your mother and

Mr. Bonnington are coming to dinner *of course*, Frederick?" and Lovel had said, "Of course they are," with a peevish bluster, whereof I now began to understand the meaning. The fact was, these two women were fighting for the possession of this child; but who was the Solomon to say which should have him? Not I. *Nenni.* I put my oar in no man's boat. Give me an easy life, my dear friends, and row me gently over.

"You had better go and dress," says Bedford sternly, looking at his master; "the first bell has rung this quarter of an hour. Will you have some '34?"

Lovel started up; he looked at the clock. "You are all ready, Batch, I see. I hope you are going to stay some time, ain't you?" And he disappeared to array himself in his sables and starch. I was thus alone with Miss Prior and her young charges, who resumed straightway their infantine gambols and quarrels.

"My dear Bessy!" I cry, holding out both hands, "I am heartily glad to—"

"Ne m'appelez que de mon nom paternel devant tout ce monde s'il vous plait, mon cher ami, mon bon protecteur!" she says hastily, in very good French, folding her hands and making a curtsy.

"Oui, oui, oui! Parlez-vous Français? J'aime, tu aimes, il aime!" cries out dear Master Popham. "What are you talking about? Here's the phaeton!" and the young innocent dashes through the open window on to the lawn, whither he is followed by his sister, and where we see the carriage containing Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington rolling over the smooth walk.

Bessy advances towards me, and gives me readily enough now the hand she had refused anon.

"I never thought you would have refused it, Bessy," said I.

"Refuse it to the best friend I ever had!" she says, pressing my hand. "Ah, dear Mr. Batchelor, what an ungrateful wretch I should be, if I did!"

"Let me see your eyes. Why do you wear spectacles? You never wore them in Beak Street," I say. You see I was very fond of the child. She had wound herself around me in a thousand fond ways. Owing to a certain Person's conduct my heart may be a ruin — a Persepolis, sir — a perfect Tadmor. But what then? May not a traveller rest under its shattered columns? May not an Arab maid repose there till the morning dawns and the caravan passes on? Yes, my heart is a Palmyra, and once a Queen inhabited me (O Zenobia! Zenobia! to think thou shouldst have been led away captive by an O'D—!). Now I am alone, alone in the solitary wilderness. Nevertheless, if a stranger comes to me I have a spring for his weary feet, I will give him the shelter of my shade. Rest thy cheek awhile, young maiden, on my marble — then go thy ways and leave me.

This I thought, or something to this effect, as in reply to my remark, "Let me see your eyes," Bessy took off her spectacles, and I took them up and looked at her. Why did n't I say to her, "My dear brave Elizabeth! as I look in your face, I see you have had an awful deal of suffering. Your eyes are inscrutably sad. We who are initiated, know the members of our Community of Sorrow. We have both been wrecked in different ships, and been cast on this shore. Let us go hand-in-hand, and find a cave and a shelter somewhere together"? I say, why did n't I say this to her? She would have come, I feel sure she would.

BESSY'S SPECTACLES.

We would have been semi-attached as it were. We would have locked up that room in either heart where the skeleton was, and said nothing about it, and pulled down the party-wall and taken our mild tea in the garden. I live in Pump Court now. It would have been better than this dingy loneliness and a snuffy laundress who bullies me. But for Bessy? Well — well, perhaps better for her too.

I remember these thoughts rushing through my mind whilst I held the spectacles. What a number of other things too? I remember two canaries making a tremendous concert in their cage. I remember the voices of the two children quarrelling on the lawn, the sound of the carriage-wheels grinding over the gravel; and then of a little old familiar cracked voice in my ear, with a "La, Mr. Batchelor! are *you* here?" And a sly face looks up at me from under an old bonnet.

"It is mamma," says Bessy.

"And I'm come to tea with Elizabeth and the dear children; and while you are at dinner, dear Mr. Batchelor, thankful — thankful for all mercies! And, dear me! here is Mrs. Bonnington, I do declare! Dear madam, how well you look — not twenty, I declare! And dear Mr. Bonnington! Oh, sir! let me — let me, I *must* press your hand. What a sermon last Sunday! All Putney was in tears!"

And the little woman, flinging out her lean arms, seizes portly Mr. Bonnington's fat hand: as he and kind Mrs. Bonnington enter at the open casement. The little woman seems inclined to do the honors of the house. "And won't you go up stairs, and put on your cap? Dear me, what a lovely ribbon! How blue does become Mrs. Bonnington! I always say so to Elizabeth," she cries, peeping into a little packet

which Mrs. Bonnington bears in her hand. After exchanging friendly words and greetings with me, that lady retires to put the lovely cap on, followed by her little jackal of an aide-de-camp. The portly clergyman surveys his pleased person in the spacious mirror. "Your things are in your old room — like to go in, and brush up a bit?" whispers Bedford to me. I am obliged to go, you see, though, for my part, I had thought, until Bedford spoke, that the ride on the top of the Putney omnibus had left me without any need of brushing; having aired my clothes, and given my young cheek a fresh and agreeable bloom.

My old room, as Bedford calls it, was that snug apartment communicating by double doors with the drawing-room, and whence you can walk on to the lawn out of the windows.

"Here's your books, here's your writing-paper," says Bedford, leading the way into the chamber. "Does sore eyes good to see *you* down here again, sir. You may smoke now. Clarence Baker smokes when he comes. Go and get some of that wine you like for dinner." And the good fellow's eyes beam kindness upon me as he nods his head, and departs to superintend the duties of his table. Of course you understand that this Bedford was my young printer's boy of former days. What a queer fellow! I had not only been kind to him, but he was grateful.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH I PLAY THE SPY.

THE room to which Bedford conducted me I hold to be the very pleasantest chamber in all the mansion of Shrublands. To lie on that comfortable, cool bachelor's bed there, and see the birds hopping about on the lawn; to peep out of the French window at early morning, inhale the sweet air, mark the dewy bloom on the grass, listen to the little warblers performing their chorus, step forth in your dressing-gown and slippers, pick a strawberry from the bed, or an apricot in its season; blow one, two, three, just half a dozen puffs of a cigarette; hear the venerable towers of Putney toll the hour of six (three hours from breakfast, by consequence), and pop back into bed again with a favorite novel, or review, to set you off (you see I am not malicious, or I could easily insert here the name of some twaddler against whom I have a grudgekin): to pop back into bed again, I say, with a book which sets you off into that dear, invaluable second sleep, by which health, spirits, appetite are so prodigiously improved:—all these I hold to be most cheerful and harmless pleasures, and have partaken of them often at Shrublands with a grateful heart. That heart may have had its griefs, but is yet susceptible of enjoyment and consolation. That bosom may have been lacerated, but is not therefore and henceforward a stranger to comfort.

After a certain affair in Dublin — nay, very soon after, three months after — I recollect remarking to myself: "Well, thank my stars, I still have a relish for '34 claret." Once at Shrublands I heard steps pacing overhead at night, and the feeble but continued wail of an infant. I wakened from my sleep, was sulky, but turned and slept again. Biddlecombe the barrister I knew was the occupant of the upper chamber. He came down the next morning looking wretchedly yellow about the cheeks, and livid round the eyes. His teething infant had kept him on the march all night, and Mrs. Biddlecombe, I am told, scolds him frightfully besides. He munched a shred of toast, and was off by the omnibus to chambers. I chipped a second egg; I may have tried one or two other nice little things on the table (Strasbourg pâté I know I never can resist, and am convinced it is perfectly wholesome). I could see my own sweet face in the mirror opposite, and my gills were as rosy as any broiled salmon. "Well — well!" I thought, as the barrister disappeared on the roof of the coach, "he has *domus* and *placens uxor* — but is she *placens? Placetne* to walk about all night with a roaring baby? Is it pleasing to go to bed after a long hard day's work, and have your wife nagnagging you because she has not been invited to the Lady Chancelloress's *soirée*, or what not? Suppose the Glorvina whom you loved so had been yours? Her eyebrows looked as if they could scowl, her eyes as if they could flash with anger. Remember what a slap she gave the little knife-boy for upsetting the butter-boat over her tabinet. Suppose *parvulus aulâ*, a little Batchelor your son, who had the toothache all night in your bedroom?" These thoughts passed rapidly through my mind as I helped myself to the

comfortable meal before me. "I say, what a lot of muffins you 're eating!" cried innocent Master Lovel. Now the married, the wealthy, the prosperous Biddlecombe only took his wretched scrap of dry toast. "Aha!" you say, "this man is consoling himself after his misfortune." O churl! and do you grudge me consolation? "Thank you, dear Miss Prior. Another cup, and plenty of cream, if you please." Of course, Lady Baker was not at table when I said, "Dear Miss Prior," at breakfast. Before her ladyship I was as mum as a mouse. Elizabeth found occasion to whisper to me during the day, in her demure way: "This is a very rare occasion. Lady B—— never allows me to breakfast alone with Mr. Lovel, but has taken her extra nap, I suppose, because you and Mr. and Mrs. Biddlecombe were here.

Now it may be that one of the double doors of the room which I inhabited was occasionally open, and that Mr. Batchelor's eyes and ears are uncommonly quick, and note a number of things which less observant persons would never regard or discover; but out of this room, which I occupied for some few days, now and subsequently, I looked forth as from a little ambush upon the proceedings of the house, and got a queer little insight into the history and characters of the personages round about me. The two grandmothers of Lovel's children were domineering over that easy gentleman, as women — not grandmothers merely, but sisters, wives, aunts, daughters, when the chance is given them — will domineer. Ah! Glorvina, what a gray mare you might have become had you chosen Mr. Batchelor for your consort! (But this I only remark with a parenthetic sigh.) The two children had taken each the side of a grandmamma, and whilst Master Pop was declared by his

maternal grandmother to be a Baker all over, and taught to despise sugar-baking and trade, little Cecilia was Mrs. Bonnington's favorite, repeated Watts's hymns with fervent precocity; declared that she would marry none but a clergyman; preached infantine sermons to her brother and maid about worldliness; and somewhat wearied me, if the truth must be told, by the intense self-respect with which she regarded her own virtues. The old ladies had that love for each other, which one may imagine that their relative positions would engender. Over the bleeding and helpless bodies of Lovel and his worthy and kind step-father, Mr. Bonnington, they skirmished, and fired shots at each other. Lady B—— would give hints about second marriages, and second families, and so forth, which of course made Mrs. Bonnington wince. Mrs. B—— had the better of Lady Baker, in consequence of the latter's notorious pecuniary irregularities. *She* had never had recourse to her son's purse, she could thank heaven. She was not afraid of meeting any tradesman in Putney or London: she had never been ordered out of the house in the late Cecilia's lifetime: *she* could go to Boulogne and enjoy the *fresh air* there. This was the terrific whip she had over Baker. Lady B——, I regret to say, in consequence of the failure of remittances, had been locked up in prison, just at a time when she was in a state of violent quarrel with her late daughter, and good Mr. Bonnington had helped her out of durance. How did I know this? Bedford, Lovel's factotum, told me: and how the old ladies were fighting like two cats.

There was one point on which the two ladies agreed. A very wealthy widower, young still, good-looking, and good-tempered, we know can sometimes

find a dear woman to console his loneliness, and protect his motherless children. From the neighboring Heath, from Wimbledon, Roehampton, Barnes, Mortlake, Richmond, Esher, Walton, Windsor, nay, Reading, Bath, Exeter, and Penzance itself, or from any other quarter of Britain, over which your fancy may please to travel, families would have come ready with dear young girls to take charge of that man's future happiness; but it is a fact that these two dragons kept all women off from their ward. An unmarried woman, with decent good looks, was scarce ever allowed to enter Shrublands gate. If such an one appeared, Lovel's two mothers sallied out, and crunched her hapless bones. Once or twice he dared to dine with his neighbors, but the ladies led him such a life that the poor creature gave up the practice, and faintly announced his preference for home. "My dear Batch," says he, "what do I care for the dinners of the people round about? Has any one of them got a better cook or better wine than mine? When I come home from business, it is an intolerable nuisance to have to dress and go out seven or eight miles to cold *entrées*, and loaded claret, and sweet port. I can't stand it, sir. I *won't* stand it" (and he stamps his foot in a resolute manner). "Give me an easy life, a wine-merchant I can trust, and my own friends, by my own fireside. Shall we have some more? We can manage another bottle between us three, Mr. Bonnington?"

"Well," says Mr. Bonnington, winking at the ruby goblet, "I am sure I have no objection, Frederick, to another bo —"

"Coffee is served, sir," cries Bedford, entering.

"Well — well, perhaps we have had enough," says worthy Bonnington.

"We *have* had enough; we all drink too much," says Lovel, briskly. "Come in to coffee."

We go to the drawing-room. Fred and I, and the two ladies, sit down to a rubber, whilst Miss Prior plays a piece of Beethoven to a slight warbling accompaniment from Mr. Bonnington's handsome nose, who has fallen asleep over the newspaper. During our play, Bessy glides out of the room—a gray shadow. Bonnington wakens up when the tray is brought in. Lady Baker likes that good old custom: it was always the fashion at the Castle, and she takes a good glass of negus too; and so do we all; and the conversation is pretty merry, and Fred Lovel hopes I shall sleep better to-night, and is very facetious about poor Biddlecombe, and the way in which that eminent Q. C. is henpecked by his wife.

From my bachelor's room, then, on the ground-floor; or from my solitary walks in the garden, whence I could oversee many things in the house; or from Bedford's communications to me, which were very friendly, curious, and unreserved; or from my own observation, which I promise you can see as far into the millstones of life as most folks', I grew to find the mysteries of Shrublands no longer mysterious to me; and, like another *Diable Boiteux*, had the roofs of a pretty number of the Shrublands rooms taken off for me.

For instance, on that very first day of my stay, whilst the family were attiring themselves for dinner, I chanced to find two secret cupboards of the house unlocked, and the contents unveiled to me. Pinhorn, the children's maid, a giddy little flirting thing in a pink ribbon, brought some articles of the toilette into my worship's apartment, and as she retired did not shut the door behind her. I might have thought

that pert little head had never been made to ache by any care; but ah! black care sits behind the horseman as Horace remarks, and not only behind the horseman, but behind the footman; and not only on the footman, but on the buxom shoulders of the lady's-maid. So with Pinhorn. You surely have remarked respecting domestic servants that they address you in a tone utterly affected and unnatural — adopting, when they are amongst each other, voices and gestures entirely different to those which their employers see and hear. Now, this little Pinhorn, in her occassional intercourse with your humble servant, had a brisk, quick, fluttering toss of the head, and a frisky manner, no doubt capable of charming some persons. As for me, ancillary allurements have, I own, had but small temptations. If Venus brought me a bedroom candle and a jug of hot water, I should give her sixpence, and no more. Having, you see, given my all to one wom — Psha! never mind *that* old story. — Well, I dare say this little creature may have been a flirt, but I took no more notice of her than if she had been a coal-scuttle.

Now, suppose she *was* a flirt. Suppose, under a mask of levity, she hid a profound sorrow. Do you suppose she was the first woman who ever has done so? Do you suppose because she has fifteen pounds a year, her tea, sugar, and beer, and told fibs to her masters and mistresses, she had not a heart. She went out of the room absolutely coaxing and leering at me as she departed, with a great counterpane over her arm; but in the next apartment I heard her voice quite changed, and another changed voice too — though not so much altered — interrogating her. My friend Dick Bedford's voice, in addressing those whom Fortune had pleased to make his superiors, was gruff

and brief. He seemed to be anxious to deliver himself of his speech to you as quickly as possible; and his tone always seemed to hint, "There — there is my message, and I have delivered it; but you know perfectly well that I am as good as you." And so he was, and so I always admitted: so even the trembling, believing, flustering, suspicious Lady Baker herself admitted, when she came into communication with this man. I have thought of this little Dick as of Swift at Sheen hard by, with Sir William Temple: or Spartacus when he was as yet the servant of the fortunate Roman gentleman who owned him. Now if Dick was intelligent, obedient, useful, only not rebellious, with his superiors, I should fancy that amongst his equals he was by no means pleasant company, and that most of them hated him for his arrogance, his honesty, and his scorn of them all.

But women do not always hate a man for scorning and despising them. Women do not revolt at the rudeness and arrogance of us their natural superiors. Women, if properly trained, come down to heel at the master's bidding, and lick the hand that has been often raised to hit them. I do not say the brave little Dick Bedford ever raised an actual hand to this poor serving-girl, but his tongue whipped her, his behavior trampled on her, and she cried, and came to him whenever he lifted a finger. Psha! Don't tell *me*. If you want a quiet, contented, orderly home, and things comfortable about you, that is the way you must manage your women.

Well, Bedford happens to be in the next room. It is the morning-room at Shrublands. You enter the dining-room from it, and they are in the habit of laying out the dessert there, before taking it in for dinner. Bedford is laying out his dessert as Pinhorn enters

from my chamber, and he begins upon her with a sarcastic sort of grunt, and a "Ho! suppose you've been making up to B., have you?"

"Oh, Mr. Bedford, *you* know very well who it is I cares for!" she says, with a sigh.

"Bother!" Mr. B. remarks.

"Well, Richard, then!" (here she weeps.)

"Leave go my 'and!—leave go my a-hand, I say!" (What *could* she have been doing to cause this exclamation?)

"Oh, Richard, it 's not your '*and* I want—it 's your ah-ah-art, Richard!"

"Mary Pinhorn," exclaims the other, "what 's the use of going on with this game? You know we could n't be a-happy together—you know your ideers ain't no good, Mary. It ain't your fault. *I* don't blame you for it, my dear. Some people are born clever, some are born tall: I ain't tall."

"Oh, you 're tall enough for me, Richard!"

Here Richard again found occasion to cry out: "*Don't*, I say! Suppose Baker was to come in and find you squeezing of my hand in this way? I say, some people are born with big brains, Miss Pinhorn, and some with big figures. Look at that ass, Bulkeley, Lady B.'s man! He is as big as a Lifeguardsman, and he has no more education, nor no more ideas, than the beef he feeds on."

"La! Richard, whathever do you mean?"

"Pooh! How should *you* know what I mean? Lay them books straight. Put the volumes together, stupid! and the papers, and get the table ready for nursery tea, and don't go on there mopping your eyes, and making a fool of yourself, Mary Pinhorn!"

"Oh, your heart is a stone—a stone—a stone!" cries Mary, in a burst of tears. "And I wish it was

hung round my neck, and I was at the bottom of the well, and — there 's the hupstairs bell!" with which signal I suppose Mary disappeared, for I only heard a sort of grunt from Mr. Bedford; then the clatter of a dish or two, the wheeling of chairs and furniture, and then came a brief silence, which lasted until the entry of Dick's subordinate, Buttons, who laid the table for the children's and Miss Prior's tea.

So here was an old story told over again. Here was love unrequited, and a little passionate heart wounded and unhappy. My poor little Mary! As I am a sinner, I will give thee a crown when I go away, and not a couple of shillings, as my wont has been. Five shillings will not console thee much, but they will console thee a little. Thou will not imagine that I bribe thee with any privy thought of evil? Away! *Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück — ich habe — geliebt!*

At this juncture I suppose Mrs. Prior must have entered the apartment, for though I could not hear her noiseless step, her little cracked voice came pretty clearly to me with a "Good afternoon, Mr. Bedford! Oh, dear me! what a many — many years we have been acquainted. To think of the pretty little printer's boy who used to come to Mr. Batchelor, and see you grown such a fine man!"

Bedford. — "How? I 'm only five foot four."

Mrs. P. — "But such a fine figure, Bedford! You are — now indeed you are! Well, you are strong and I am weak. You are well, and I am weary and faint."

Bedford. — "The tea 's a-coming directly, Mrs. Prior."

Mrs. P. — "Could you give me a glass of water first — and perhaps a little sherry in it, please. Oh, thank you. How good it is! How it revives a poor old wretch! — and your cough, Bedford? How is your

cough? I have brought you some lozenges for it—some of Sir Henry Halford's own, prescribing for my dear husband, and—"

Bedford (abruptly).—"I must go—never mind the cough now, Mrs. P."

Mrs. Prior.—"What's here? almonds and raisins, macaroons, preserved apricots, biscuits for dessert—and—la bless the man! how you sta—artled me!"

Bedford.—"Don't! Mrs. Prior: I beg and implore of you, keep your 'ands out of the dessert. I can't stand it. I must tell the governor if this game goes on."

Mrs. P.—"Ah! Mr. Bedford, it is for my poor—poor child at home: the doctor recommended her apricots. Ay, indeed, dear Bedford: he did for her poor chest!"

Bedford.—"And I'm blest if you have n't been at the sherry-bottle again! Oh, Mrs. P., you drive me wild—you do. I can't see Lovel put upon in this way. You know it's only last week I whopped the boy for stealing the sherry, and 't was you done it."

Mrs. Prior (passionately).—"For a sick child, Bedford. What won't a mother do for her sick child?"

Bedford.—"Your children's always sick. You're always taking things for 'em. I tell you, by the laws, I won't and must n't stand it, Mrs. P."

Mrs. Prior (with much spirit).—"Go and tell your master, Bedford! Go and tell tales of me, sir. Go and have me dismissed out of this house. Go and have my daughter dismissed out of this house, and her poor mother brought to disgrace."

Bedford.—"Mrs. Prior—Mrs. Prior! you have been a-taking the sherry. A glass I don't mind, but you've been a-bringing that bottle again."

Mrs. P. (whimpering). — "It 's for Charlotte, Bedford! my poor delicate angel of a Shatty! she 's ordered it, indeed she is!"

Bedford. — "Confound your Shatty! I can't stand it, I must n't and won't, Mrs. P.!"

Here a noise and clatter of other persons arriving interrupted the conversation between Lovel's major-domo and the mother of the children's governess, and I presently heard Master Pop's voice saying, "You 're going to tea with us, Mrs. Prior?"

Mrs. P. — "Your kind dear grandmammas have asked me, dear Master Popham."

Pop. — "But you 'd like to go to dinner best, would n't you? I dare say you have doosid bad dinners at your house. Have n't you, Mrs. Prior?"

Cissy. — "Don 't say doosid. It 's a naughty word, Popham!"

Pop. — "I *will* say doosid. Doo-oo-oosid! There! And I 'll say worse words too, if I please, and you hold *your* tongue. What 's there for tea? jam for tea? strawberries for tea? muffins for tea? That 's it: strawberries and muffins for tea. And we 'll go in to dessert besides: that 's prime. I say, Miss Prior?"

Miss Prior. — "What do you say, Popham?"

Pop. — "Should n't you like to go in to dessert? — there 's lots of good things there, — and have wine. Only when grandmamma tells her story about — about my grandfather and King George the what-d'ye-call-'im: King George the Fourth — "

Cis. — "Ascended the throne, 1820; died at Windsor, 1830."

Pop. — "Bother Windsor! Well, when she tells that story, I can tell you *that* ain't very good fun."

Cis. — "And it 's rude of you to speak in that way of your grandmamma, Pop!"

"WHERE THE SUGAR GOES."

Pop. — "And you 'll hold *your* tongue, Miss! And I shall speak as I like. And I 'm a man, and I don't want any of your stuff and nonsense. I say, Mary, give us the marmalade!"

Cis. — "You have had plenty to eat, and boys ought not to have so much."

Pop. — "Boys may have what they like. Boys can eat twice as much as women. There, I don't want any more. Anybody may have the rest."

Mrs. Prior. — "What nice marmalade! I know some children, my dears, who —"

Miss P. (imploringly). — "Mamma, I beseech you —"

Mrs. P. — "I know three dear children who very — very seldom have nice marmalade and delicious cake."

Pop. — "I know whom you mean: you mean Augustus, and Frederick, and Fanny — your children? Well, they shall have marmalade and cake."

Cis. — "Oh, yes, I will give them all mine."

Pop. (who speaks, I think, as if his mouth was full). — "I won't give 'em mine; but they can have another pot, you know. You have always got a basket with you; you know you have, Mrs. Prior. You had it the day you took the cold fowl."

Mrs. P. — "For the poor blind black man! Oh, how thankful he was to his dear young benefactors! He is a man and a brother, and to help him was most kind of you, dear Master Popham!"

Pop. — "That black beggar my brother? He ain't my brother."

Mrs. P. — "No, dears, you have both the most lovely complexions in the world."

Pop. — "Bother complexions! I say Mary, another pot of marmalade."

Mary. — "I don't know, Master Pop — "

Pop. — "I *will* have it, I say. If you don't, I'll smash everything, I will."

Cis. — "Oh, you naughty, rude boy!"

Pop. — "Hold your tongue, stupid! I will have it, I say."

Mrs. P. — "Do humor him, Mary, please. And I'm sure my dear children at home will be better for it."

Pop. — "There's your basket. Now put this cake in, and this bit of butter, and this sugar on the top of the butter. Hurray! hurray! Oh, what jolly fun! Here's some cake — no, I think I'll keep that; and, Mrs. Prior, tell Gus, and Fanny, and Fred, I sent it to 'em, and they shall never want for anything as long as Frederick Popham Baker Lovel, Esquire, can give it them. Did Gus like my gray great-coat that I did n't want?"

Miss P. — "You did not give him your new great-coat?"

Pop. — "It was beastly ugly, and I did give it him; and I'll give him this if I choose. And don't you speak to me; I'm going to school, and I ain't going to have no governesses soon."

Mrs. Prior. — "Ah, dear child! what a nice coat it is; and how well my poor boy looks in it!"

Miss Prior. — "Mother, mother! I implore you — mother — !"

Mr. Lovel enters. — "So the children at high tea! How d'ye do, Mrs. Prior? I think we shall be able to manage that little matter for your second boy, Mrs. Prior."

Mrs. Prior. — Heaven bless you, — bless you, my dear, kind benefactor! Don't prevent me, Elizabeth: I *must* kiss his hand. There!"

And here the second bell rings, and I enter the morning-room, and can see Mrs. Prior's great basket popped cunningly under the table-cloth. Her basket? — her *porte-manteau*, her *porte-bouteille*, her *porte gâteau*, her *porte-pantalon*, her *porte-butin* in general. Thus I could see that every day Mrs. Prior visited Shrublands she gleaned greedily of the harvest. Well, Boaz was rich, and this ruthless Ruth was hungry and poor.

At the welcome summons of the second bell, Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington also made their appearance; the latter in the new cap which Mrs. Prior had admired, and which she saluted with a nod of smiling recognition: "Dear madam, it *is* lovely — I told you it was," whispers Mrs. P., and the wearer of the blue ribbons turned her bonny, good-natured face towards the looking-glass, and I hope saw no reason to doubt Mrs. Prior's sincerity. As for Bonnington, I could perceive that he had been taking a little nap before dinner, — a practice by which the appetite is improved, I think, and the intellect prepared for the bland prandial conversation.

"Have the children been quite good?" asks papa, of the governess.

"There are worse children, sir," says Miss Prior, meekly.

"Make haste and have your dinner; we are coming in to dessert!" cries Pop.

"You would not have us go to dine without your grandmother?" papa asks. Dine without Lady Baker, indeed! I should have liked to see him go to dinner without Lady Baker.

Pending her ladyship's arrival, papa and Mr. Bonnington walk to the open window, and gaze on the lawn and the towers of Putney rising over the wall.

"Ah, my good Mrs. Prior," cries Mrs. Bonnington, "those grandchildren of mine are sadly spoiled."

"Not by *you*, dear madam," says Mrs. Prior, with a look of commiseration. "Your dear children at home are, I am sure, perfect models of goodness. Is Master Edward well, ma'am? and Master Robert, and Master Richard, and dear funny little Master William? Ah, what blessings those children are to you! If a certain wilful little nephew of theirs took after them!"

"The little naughty wretch!" cried Mrs. Bonnington; "do you know, Prior, my grandson Frederick — (I don't know why they call him Popham in this house, or why he should be ashamed of his father's name) — do you know that Popham spilt the ink over my dear husband's bands, which he keeps in his great dictionary, and fought with my Richard, who is three years older than Popham, and actually beat his own uncle!"

"Gracious goodness!" I cried; "you don't mean to say ma'am, that Pop has been laying violent hands upon his venerable relative?" I feel ever so gentle a pull at my coat. Was it Miss Prior who warned me not to indulge in the sarcastic method with good Mrs. Bonnington?

"I don't know why you call my poor child a venerable relative," Mrs. B. remarks. "I know that Popham was very rude to him; and then Robert came to his brother, and that graceless little Popham took a stick, and my husband came out, and do you know Popham Lovel actually kicked Mr. Bonnington on the shins, and butted him like a little naughty ram; and if you think such conduct is a subject for ridicule — I *don't*, Mr. Batchelor."

"My dear — dear lady!" I cried, seizing her hand;

for she was going to cry, and in woman's eye the unanswerable tear always raises a deuce of a commotion in my mind. "I would not for the world say a word that should willingly vex you; and as for Popham, I give you my honor, I think nothing would do that child so much good as a good whipping."

"He is spoiled, Madam; we know by *whom*," says Mrs. Prior. "Dear Lady Baker! how that red does become your ladyship." In fact, Lady B. sailed in at this juncture, arrayed in ribbons of scarlet; with many brooches, bangles, and other gimcracks ornamenting her plenteous person. And now her ladyship having arrived, Bedford announced that dinner was served, and Lovel gave his mother-in-law an arm, whilst I offered mine to Mrs. Bonnington to lead her to the adjoining dining-room. And the pacable kind soul speedily made peace with me. And we ate and drank of Lovel's best. And Lady Baker told us her celebrated anecdote of George the Fourth's compliment to her late dear husband, Sir Popham, when his Majesty visited Ireland. Mrs. Prior and her basket were gone when we repaired to the drawing-room: having been hunting all day, the hungry mother had returned with her prey to her wide-mouthed birdikins. Elizabeth looked very pale and handsome, reading at her lamp. And whist and the little tray finished the second day at Shrublands.

I paced the moonlit walk alone when the family had gone to rest; and smoked my cigar under the tranquil stars. I had been some thirty hours in the house, and what a queer little drama was unfolding itself before me! What struggles and passions were going on here — what *certamina* and *motus animorum!* Here was Lovel, this willing horse; and what a crowd of relations, what a heap of luggage had the

honest fellow to carry! How that little Mrs. Prior was working, and scheming, and tacking, and flattering, and fawning, and plundering, to be sure! And that serene Elizabeth, with what consummate skill, art, and prudence, had she to act, to keep her place with two such rivals reigning over her. And Elizabeth not only kept her place, but she actually was liked by those two women! Why, Elizabeth Prior, my wonder and respect for thee increase with every hour during which I contemplate thy character! How is it that you live with those lionesses, and are not torn to pieces? What sops of flattery do you cast to them to appease them? Perhaps I do not think my Elizabeth brings up her two children very well, and, indeed, have seldom become acquainted with young people more odious. But is the fault hers, or is it Fortune's spite? How, with these two grandmothers spoiling the children alternately, can the governess do better than she does? How has she managed to lull their natural jealousy? I will work out that intricate problem, that I will, ere many days are over. And there are other mysteries which I perceive. There is poor Mary breaking her heart for the butler. That butler, why does he connive at the rogueries of Mrs. Prior? Ha! herein lies a mystery too; and I vow I will penetrate it ere long. So saying, I fling away the butt-end of the fragrant companion of my solitude, and enter into my room by the open French window just as Bedford walks in at the door. I had heard the voice of that worthy domestic warbling a grave melody from his pantry window as I paced the lawn. When the family goes to rest, Bedford passes a couple of hours in study in his pantry, perusing the newspapers and the new works, and forming his opinion on books and politics. Indeed I have reason to be-

lieve that the letters in the "Putney Herald" and "Mortlake Monitor," signed "A Voice from the Basement," were Mr. Bedford's composition.

"Come to see all safe for the night, sir, and the windows closed before you turn in," Mr. Dick remarks. "Best not leave 'em open, even if you are asleep inside — catch cold — many bad people about. Remember Bromley murder! — Enter at French windows — you cry out — cut your throat — and there 's a fine paragraph for papers next morning!"

"What a good voice you have, Bedford," I say; "I heard you warbling just now — a famous bass, on my word!"

"Always fond of music — sing when I 'm cleaning my plate — learned in Old Beak Street. *She* used to teach me," and he points towards the upper floors.

"What a little chap you were then! — when you came for my proofs for the 'Museum,'" I remark.

"I ain't a very big one now, sir; but it ain't the big ones that do the best work," remarks the butler.

"I remember Miss Prior saying that you were as old as she was."

"Hm! and I scarce came up to her — eh — elbow." (Bedford had constantly to do battle with the aspirates. He conquered them, but you could see there was a struggle.)

"And it was Miss Prior taught you to sing?" I say, looking him full in the face.

He dropped his eyes — he could not bear my scrutiny. I knew the whole story now.

"When Mrs. Lovel died at Naples, Miss Prior brought home the children, and you acted as courier to the whole party?"

"Yes, sir," says Bedford. "We had the carriage, and of course poor Mrs. L. was sent home by sea, and

I brought home the young ones, and — and the rest of the family. I could say *Avanti! avanti!* to the Italian postilions, and ask for *des chevaux* when we crossed the Halps — the Alps, — I beg your pardon, sir."

"And you used to see the party to their rooms at the inns, and call them up in the morning, and you had a blunderbuss in the rumble to shoot the robbers?"

"Yes," says Bedford.

"And it was a pleasant time?"

"Yes," says Bedford, groaning, and hanging down his miserable head. "Oh, yes, it was a pleasant time."

He turned away; he stamped his foot; he gave a sort of imprecation; he pretended to look at some books, and dust them with a napkin which he carried. I saw the matter at once. "Poor Dick!" says I.

"It 's the old — old story," says Dick. "It 's you and the Hirish girl over again, sir. I 'm only a servant, I know; but I 'm a — Confound it!" And here he stuck his fists into his eyes.

"And this is the reason you allow old Mrs. Prior to steal the sherry and the sugar?" I ask.

"How do you know that? — you remember how she prigged in Beak Street?" asks Bedford, fiercely.

"I overheard you and her just before dinner," I said.

"You had better go and tell Lovel — have me turned out of the house. That 's the best thing that can be done," cries Bedford again, fiercely, stamping his feet.

"It is always my custom to do as much mischief as I possibly can, Dick Bedford," I say, with fine irony.

He seizes my hand. "No, you're a trump — everybody knows that; beg pardon, sir; but you see I'm so — so — dash! — miserable, that I hardly know whether I'm walking on my head or my heels."

"You haven't succeeded in touching her heart, then, my poor Dick?" I said.

Dick shook his head. "She has no heart," he said. If she ever had any, that fellar in India took it away with him. She don't care for anybody alive. She likes me as well as any one. I think she appreciates me, you see, sir; she can't 'elp it — I'm blest if she can. She knows I am a better man than most of the chaps that come down here, — I am, if I was n't a servant. If I were only an apothecary — like that grinning jackass who comes here from Barnes in his gig, and wants to marry her — she'd have me. She keeps him on, and encourages him — she can do that cleverly enough. And the old dragon fancies she is fond of him. Psha! Why am I making a fool of myself? — I am only a servant. Mary's good enough for me; *she'll* have me fast enough. I beg your pardon, sir; I am making a fool of myself; I ain't the first, sir. Good-night, sir; hope you'll sleep well." And Dick departs to his pantry and his private cares, and I think, "Here is another victim who is writhing under the merciless arrows of the universal torturer."

"He is a very singular person," Miss Prior remarked to me, as, next day, I happened to be walking on Putney Heath by her side, while her young charges trotted on and quarrelled in the distance. "I wonder where the world will stop next, dear Mr. Batchelor, and how far the march of intellect will proceed! Any one so free, and easy, and cool, as this Mr. Bedford I never saw. When we were abroad with poor Mrs.

Lovel, he picked up French and Italian in quite a surprising way. He takes books down from the library now: the most abstruse works — works that *I* could n't pretend to read, I 'm sure. Mr. Bonnington says he has taught himself history, and Horace in Latin, and algebra, and I don't know what besides. He talked to the servants and tradespeople at Naples much better than *I* could, I assure you." And Elizabeth tosses up her head heavenwards, as if she would ask of yonder skies how such a man could possibly be as good as herself.

She stepped along the Heath — slim, stately, healthy, tall, — her firm, neat foot treading swiftly over the grass. She wore her blue spectacles, but I think she could have looked at the sun without the glasses and without wincing. That sun was playing with her tawny, wavy ringlets, and scattering gold-dust over them.

"It is wonderful," said I, admiring her, "how these people give themselves airs, and try to imitate their betters!"

"Most extraordinary!" says Bessy. She had not one particle of humor in all her composition. I think Dick Bedford was right; and she had no heart. Well, she had famous lungs, health, appetite, and with these one may get through life not uncomfortably.

"You and Saint Cecilia got on pretty well, Bessy?" I ask.

"Saint who?"

"The late Mrs. L."

"Oh, Mrs. Lovel: — yes. What an odd person you are! I did not understand whom you meant," says Elizabeth the downright.

"Not a good temper, I should think? She and Fred fought?"

"*He* never fought."

"I think a little bird has told me that she was not adverse to the admiration of our sex?"

"I don't speak ill of my friends, Mr. Batchelor," replies Elizabeth the prudent.

"You must have difficult work with the two old ladies at Shrublands?"

Bessy shrugs her shoulders. "A little management is necessary in all families," she says. "The ladies are naturally a little jealous one of the other; but they are both of them not unkind to me in the main; and I have to bear no more than other women in my situation. It was not all pleasure at St. Boniface, Mr. Batchelor, with my uncle and aunt. I suppose all governesses have their difficulties; and I must get over mine as best I can, and be thankful for the liberal salary which your kindness procured for me, and which enables me to help my poor mother and my brothers and sisters."

"I suppose you give all your money to her?"

"Nearly all. They must have it; poor mamma has so many mouths to feed."

"And *notre petit cœur*, Bessy?" I ask, looking in her fresh face. "Have we replaced the Indian officer?"

Another shrug of the shoulders. "I suppose we all get over those follies, Mr. Batchelor. I remember somebody else was in a sad way too," — and she looks askance at the victim of Glorvina. "*My* folly is dead and buried long ago. I have to work so hard for Mamma, and my brothers and sisters, that I have no time for such nonsense."

Here a gentleman in a natty gig, with a high-trotting horse, came spanking towards us over the common, and with my profound knowledge of human nature, I saw

at once that the servant by the driver's side was a little doctor's boy, and the gentleman himself was a neat and trim general practitioner.

He stared at me grimly, as he made a bow to Miss Bessy. I saw jealousy and suspicion in his aspect.

"Thank you, dear Mr. Drencher," says Bessy, "for your kindness to Mamma and our children. You are going to call at Shrublands? Lady Baker was indisposed this morning. She says when she can't have Dr. Piper, there's nobody like you." And this artful one smiles blandly on Mr. Drencher.

"I have got the workhouse, and a case at Roehampton, and I shall be at Shrublands *about two*, Miss Prior," says that young doctor, whom Bedford had called a grinning jackass. He laid an eager emphasis on the *two*. Go to! I know what two and two mean as well as most people, Mr. Drencher! Glances of rage he shot at me from out his gig. The serpents of that miserable Æsculapius unwound themselves from his rod, and were gnawing at his swollen heart!

"He has a good practice, Mr. Drencher?" I ask, sly rogue as I am.

"He is very good to Mamma and our children. His practice with *them* does not profit him much," says Bessy.

"And I suppose our walk will be over before two o'clock?" remarks that slyboots who is walking with Miss Prior.

"I hope so. Why, it is our dinner-time; and this walk on the Heath does make one so hungry!" cries the governess.

"Bessy Prior," I said, "it is my belief that you no more want spectacles than a cat in the twilight." To

which she replied, that I was such a strange, odd man, she really could not understand me.

We were back at Shrublands at two. Of course we must not keep the children's dinner waiting: and of course Mr. Drencher drove up at five minutes past two, with his gig-horse all in a lather. I, who knew the secrets of the house, was amused to see the furious glances which Bedford darted from the sideboard, or as he served the doctor with cutlets. Drencher, for his part, scowled at me. I, for my part, was easy, witty, pleasant, and I trust profoundly wicked and malicious. I bragged about my aristocratic friends to Lady Baker. I trumped her old-world stories about George the Fourth at Dublin with the latest dandified intelligence I had learned at the club. That the young doctor should be dazzled and disgusted was, I own, my wish; and I enjoyed his rage as I saw him choking with jealousy over his victuals.

But why was Lady Baker sulky with me? How came it, my fashionable stories had no effect upon that polite matron? Yesterday at dinner she had been gracious enough: and turning her back upon those poor simple Bonningtons, who knew nothing of the *beau monde* at all, had condescended to address herself specially to me several times with an "I need not tell *you*, Mr. Batchelor, that the Duchess of Dorsetshire's maiden name was De Bobus;" or, "You know very well that the etiquette at the Lord Lieutenant's balls, at Dublin Castle, is for the wives of baronets to" — etc. etc.

Now whence, I say, did it arise that Lady Baker, who had been kind and familiar with me on Sunday, should on Monday turn me a shoulder as cold as that lamb which I offered to carve for the family, and which remained from yesterday's quarter? I had

thought of staying but two days at Shrublands. I generally am bored at country-houses. I was going away on the Monday morning, but Lovel, when he and I and the children and Miss Prior breakfasted together before he went to business, pressed me to stay so heartily and sincerely that I agreed, gladly enough, to remain. I could finish a scene or two of my tragedy at my leisure; besides, there were one or two little comedies going on in the house which inspired me with no little curiosity.

Lady Baker growled at me, then, during lunch-time. She addressed herself in whispers and hints to Mr. Drencher. She had in her own man Bulkeley, and bullied him. She desired to know whether she was to have the barouche or not: and when informed that it was at her ladyship's service, said it was a great deal too cold for the open carriage, and that she would have the brougham. When she was told that Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington had impounded the brougham, she said she had no idea of people taking other people's carriages: and when Mr. Bedford remarked that her ladyship had her choice that morning, and had chosen the barouche, she said, "I did n't speak to you, sir; and I will thank you not to address me until you are spoken to!" She made the place so hot that I began to wish I had quitted it.

"And pray, Miss Prior, where is Captain Baker to sleep," she asked, "now that the ground-floor room is engaged?"

Miss Prior meekly said, "Captain Baker would have the pink room."

"The room on my landing-place, without double doors? Impossible! Clarence is always smoking. Clarence will fill the whole house with his smoke. He shall *not* sleep in the pink room. I expected the

ground-floor room for him, which — a — this gentleman persists in not vacating." And the dear creature looked me full in the face.

"This gentleman smokes, too, and is so comfortable where he is that he proposes to remain there," I say, with a bland smile.

"Haspic of plovers' eggs, sir," says Bedford, handing a dish over my back. And he actually gave me a little dig, and growled, "Go it — give it her!"

"There is a capital inn on the Heath," I continue, peeling one of my opal favorites. "If Captain Baker must smoke, he may have a room there."

"Sir! my son does not live at inns," cries Lady Baker.

"Oh, Grandma! don't he though? And was n't there a row at the 'Star and Garter;' and did n't Pa pay Uncle Clarence's bill there, though?"

"Silence, Popham! Little boys should be seen and not heard," says Cissy. "Should n't little boys be seen and not heard, Miss Prior?"

"They should n't insult their grandmothers. O my Cecilia — my Cecilia!" cries Lady Baker, lifting her hand.

"You sha'n't hit me! I say, you sha'n't hit me!" roars Pop, starting back, and beginning to square at his enraged ancestress. The scene was growing painful. And there was that rascal of a Bedford choking with suppressed laughter at the sideboard. Bulkeley, her ladyship's man, stood calm as fate; but young Buttons burst out in a guffaw; on which, I assure you, Lady Baker looked as savage as Lady Macbeth.

"Am I to be insulted by my daughter's servants?" cries Lady Baker. "I will leave the house this instant."

"At what hour will your ladyship have the barouche?" says Bedford, with perfect gravity.

If Mr. Drencher had whipped out a lancet and bled Lady B—— on the spot, he would have done her good. I shall draw the curtain over this sad—this humiliating scene. Drop, little curtain, on this absurd little act.

CHAPTER IV.

A BLACK SHEEP.

The being for whom my friend Dick Bedford seemed to have a special contempt and aversion, was Mr. Bulkeley, the tall footman in attendance upon Lovel's dear mother-in-law. One of the causes of Bedford's wrath, the worthy fellow explained to me. In the servants' hall, Bulkeley was in the habit of speaking in disrespectful and satirical terms of his mistress, enlarging upon her many foibles, and describing her pecuniary difficulties to the many *habitués* of that second social circle at Shrublands. The hold which Mr. Bulkeley had over his lady lay in a long unsettled account of wages, which her ladyship was quite disinclined to discharge. And, in spite of this insolvency, the footman must have found his profit in the place, for he continued to hold it from year to year, and to fatten on his earnings, such as they were. My lady's dignity did not allow her to travel without this huge personage in her train; and a great comfort it must have been to her, to reflect that in all the country-houses which she visited (and she would go wherever she could force an invitation), her attendant freely explained himself regarding her peculiarities, and made his brother servants aware of his mistress's embarrassed condition. And yet the woman, whom I suppose no soul alive respected (unless, haply, she herself had a hankering delusion that she was a respectable woman), thought that her posi-

tion in life forbade her to move abroad without a maid, and this hulking encumbrance in plush; and never was seen anywhere, in watering-place, country-house, hotel, unless she was so attended.

Between Bedford and Bulkeley, then, there was feud and mutual hatred. Bedford chaffed the big man by constant sneers and sarcasms, which penetrated the other's dull hide, and caused him frequently to assert that he would punch Dick's ugly head off. The housekeeper had frequently to interpose, and fling her matronly arms between these men of war; and perhaps Bedford was forced to be still at times, for Bulkeley was nine inches taller than himself, and was perpetually bragging of his skill and feats as a bruiser. This sultan may also have wished to fling his pocket-handkerchief to Miss Mary Pinhorn, who, though she loved Bedford's wit and cleverness, might also be not insensible to the magnificent chest, calves, whiskers, of Mr. Bulkeley. On this delicate subject, however, I can't speak. The men hated each other. You have, no doubt, remarked, in your experience of life, that when men *do* hate each other, about a woman, or some other cause, the real reason is never assigned. You say, "The conduct of such and such a man to his grandmother — his behavior in selling that horse to Benson — his manner of brushing his hair down the middle" — or what you will, "makes him so offensive to me that I can't endure him." His verses, therefore, are mediocre; his speeches in Parliament are utter failures; his practice at the bar is dwindling every year; his powers (always small) are utterly leaving him, and he is repeating his confounded jokes until they quite nauseate. Why, only about myself, and within these three days, I read a nice little article — written in sorrow, you know, not in anger — by our eminent *confrère* Wiggins, deploring

the decay of, etc., etc. And Wiggins's little article which was not found suitable for a certain magazine? — *Allons donc!* The drunkard says the pickled salmon gave him the headache; the man who hates us gives *a* reason, but not *the* reason. Bedford was angry with Bulkeley for abusing his mistress at the servants' table? Yes. But for what else besides? I don't care — nor possibly does your worship, the exalted reader, for these low vulgar kitchen quarrels.

Out of that ground-floor room, then, I would not move in spite of the utmost efforts of my Lady Baker's broad shoulder to push me out; and with many grins that evening, Bedford complimented me on my gallantry in routing the enemy at luncheon. I think he may possibly have told his master, for Lovel looked very much alarmed and uneasy when we greeted each other on his return from the city, but became more composed when Lady Baker appeared at the second dinner-bell, without a trace on her fine countenance of that storm which had caused all her waves to heave with such commotion at noon. How finely some people, by the way, can hang up quarrels — or pop them into a drawer — as they do their work, when dinner is announced, and take them out again at a convenient season! Baker was mild, gentle, a thought sad and sentimental — tenderly interested about her dear son and daughter, in Ireland, whom she *must* go and see — quite easy in hand, in a word, and to the immense relief of all of us. She kissed Lovel on retiring, and prayed blessings on her Frederick. She pointed to the picture: nothing could be more melancholy or more gracious.

"*She* go!" says Mr. Bedford to me at night — "not she. She knows when she's well off; was obliged to turn out of Bakerstown before she came

here: that brute Bulkeley told me so. She 's always quarrelling with her son and his wife. Angels don't grow everywhere as they do at Putney, Mr. B.! You gave it her well to-day at lunch, you did though!" During my stay at Shrublands, Mr. Bedford payed me a regular evening visit in my room, set the *carte du pays* before me, and in his curt way acquainted me with the characters of the inmates of the house, and the incidents occurring therein.

Captain Clarence Baker did not come to Shrublands on the day when his anxious mother wished to clear out my nest (and expel the amiable bird in it) for her son's benefit. I believe an important fight, which was to come off in the Essex Marshes, and which was postponed in consequence of the interposition of the county magistrates, was the occasion, or at any rate the pretext, of the Captain's delay. "He likes seeing fights better than going to 'em, the Captain does," my major-domo remarked. "His regiment was ordered to India, and he sold out: climate don't agree with his precious health. The Captain ain't been here ever so long, not since poor Mrs. L.'s time, before Miss P. came here: Captain Clarence and his sister had a tremendous quarrel together. He was up to all sorts of pranks, the Captain was. Not a good lot, by any means, I should say, Mr. Batchelor." And here Bedford begins to laugh. "Did you ever read, sir, a farce called 'Raising the Wind?' There 's plenty of Jeremy Diddlers now, Captain Jeremy Diddlers and Lady Jeremy Diddlers too. Have you such a thing as half a crown about you? If you have, don't invest it in some folks' pockets — that 's all. Beg your pardon, sir, if I am bothering you with talking."

As long as I was at Shrublands, and ready to par-

take of breakfast with my kind host and his children and their governess, Lady Baker had her own breakfast taken to her room. But when there were no visitors in the house, she would come groaning out of her bed-room to be present at the morning meal; and not uncommonly would give the little company anecdotes of the departed saint, under whose invocation, as it were, we were assembled, and whose simpering effigy looked down upon us, over her harp, and from the wall. The eyes of the portrait followed you about, as portraits' eyes so painted will; and those glances, as it seemed to me, still domineered over Lovel, and made him quail as they had done in life. Yonder, in the corner, was Cecilia's harp, with its leathern cover. I likened the skin to that drum which the dying Zisca ordered should be made out of his hide, to be beaten before the hosts of his people and inspire terror. *Vous concevez*, I did not say to Lovel at breakfast, as I sat before the ghostly musical instrument, "My dear fellow, that skin of Cordovan leather belonging to your defunct Cecilia's harp is like the hide which," etc.; but I confess, at first, I used to have a sort of *crawly* sensation, as of a sickly genteel ghost flitting about the place, in an exceedingly peevish humor, trying to scold and command, and finding her defunct voice could n't be heard — trying to re-illumine her extinguished leers and faded smiles and ogles, and finding no one admired or took note. In the gray of the gloaming, in the twilight corner where stands the shrouded companion of song — what is that white figure flickering round the silent harp? Once, as we were assembled in the room at afternoon tea, a bird, entering at the open window, perched on the instrument. Popham dashed at it. Lovel was deep in conversation upon the wine-

duties with a Member of Parliament he had brought down to dinner. Lady Baker, who was, if I may use the expression, "jawing," as usual, and telling one of her tremendous stories about the Lord Lieutenant to Mr. Bonnington, took no note of the incident. Elizabeth did not seem to remark it: what was a bird on a harp to her, but a sparrow perched on a bit of leather-casing! All the ghosts in Putney church-yard might rattle all their bones, and would not frighten that stout spirit!

I was amused at a precaution which Bedford took, and somewhat alarmed at the distrust towards Lady Baker which he exhibited, when, one day on my return from town — whither I had made an excursion of four or five hours — I found my bed-room door locked, and Dick arrived with the key. "He 's wrote to say he 's coming this evening, and if he had come when you was away, Lady B. was capable of turning your things out, and putting his in, and taking her oath she believed you was going to leave. The long-bows Lady B. do pull are perfectly awful, Mr. B.! So it was long-bow to long-bow, Mr. Batchelor; and I said you had took the key in your pocket, not wishing to have your papers disturbed. She tried the lawn window, but I had bolted that, and the Captain will have the pink room, after all, and must smoke up the chimney. I should have liked to see him, or you, or any one do it in poor Mrs. L.'s time — I just should!"

During my visit to London, I had chanced to meet my friend Captain Fitzb—dle, who belongs to a dozen clubs, and knows something of every man in London. "Know anything of Clarence Baker?" "Of course, I do," says Fitz; "and if you want any *renseignement*, my dear fellow, I have the honor to inform you that

a blacker little sheep does not trot the London *pavé*. Wherever that ingenious officer's name is spoken — at Tattersall's, at his clubs, in his late regiments, in men's society, in ladies' society, in that expanding and most agreeable circle which you may call no society at all — a chorus of maledictions rises up at the mention of Baker. Know anything of Clarence Baker! My dear fellow, enough to make your hair turn white, unless (as I sometimes fondly imagine) nature has already performed that process, when of course I can't pretend to act upon mere hair-dye." (The whiskers of the individual who addressed me, innocent, stared me in the face as he spoke, and were dyed of the most unblushing purple.) "Clarence Baker, sir, is a young man who would have been invaluable in Sparta as a warning against drunkenness and an exemplar of it. He has helped the regimental surgeon to some most interesting experiments in *delirium tremens*. He is known, and not in the least trusted, in every billiard-room in Brighton, Canterbury, York, Sheffield — on every pavement which has rung with the clink of dragoon boot-heels. By a wise system of revoking at whist he has lost games which have caused not only his partners, but his opponents and the whole club, to admire him and to distrust him: long before and since he was of age, he has written his eminent name to bills which have been dishonored, and has nobly pleaded his minority as a reason for declining to pay. From the garrison towns where he has been quartered, he has carried away not only the hearts of the milliners, but their gloves, haberdashery, and perfumery. He has had controversies with Cornet Green, regarding horse transactions; disputed turf accounts with Lieutenant Brown; and betting and backgammon differences with Captain

Black. From all I have heard he is the worthy son of his admirable mother. And I bet you even on the four events, if you stay three days in a country-house with him — which appears to be your present happy idea — that he will quarrel with you, insult you, and apologize; that he will intoxicate himself more than once; that he will offer to play cards with you, and not pay on losing (if he wins, I perhaps need not state what his conduct will be); and that he will try to borrow money from you, and most likely from your servant, before he goes away." So saying, the sententious Fitz strutted up the steps of one of his many club-haunts in Pall Mall, and left me forewarned, and I trust forearmed, against Captain Clarence and all his works.

The adversary, when at length I came in sight of him, did not seem very formidable. I beheld a weakly little man with Chinese eyes, and pretty little feet and hands, whose pallid countenance told of Finishes and Casinos. His little chest and fingers were decorated with many jewels. A perfume of tobacco hung round him. His little mustache was twisted with an elaborate gummy curl. I perceived that the little hand which twirled the mustache shook wofully: and from the little chest there came a cough surprisingly loud and dismal.

He was lying on a sofa as I entered, and the children of the house were playing round him. "If you are our uncle, why did n't you come to see us oftener?" asks Popham.

"How should I know that you were such uncommonly nice children?" asks the Captain.

"We 're not nice to you," says Popham. "Why do you cough so? Mamma used to cough. And why does your hand shake so?"

"My hand shakes because I am ill: and I cough because I'm ill. Your mother died of it, and I dare say I shall too."

"I hope you'll be good, and repent before you die, Uncle, and I will lend you some nice books," says Cecilia.

"Oh, bother books!" cries Pop.

"And I hope *you'll* be good, Popham," and "You hold *your* tongue, Miss," and "I shall," and "I sha'n't," and "You're another," and "I'll tell Miss Prior," — "Go and tell, tell-tale," — "Boo" — "Boo" — "Boo" — "Boo" — and I don't know what more exclamations came tumultuously and rapidly from these dear children, as their uncle lay before them, a handkerchief to his mouth, his little feet high raised on the sofa cushions.

Captain Baker turned a little eye towards me, as I entered the room, but did not change his easy and elegant posture. When I came near to the sofa where he reposed, he was good enough to call out:

"Glass of sherry!"

"It's Mr. Batchelor; it is n't Bedford, Uncle," says Cissy.

"Mr. Batchelor ain't got any sherry in his pocket: — have you, Mr. Batchelor? You ain't like old Mrs. Prior, always pocketing things, are you?" cries Pop, and falls a-laughing at the ludicrous idea of my being mistaken for Bedford.

"Beg your pardon. How should I know, you know?" drawls the invalid on the sofa. "Everybody's the same now, you see."

"Sir!" says I, and "sir" was all I could say. The fact is, I could have replied with something remarkably neat and cutting, which would have transfixed the languid little jackanapes who dared to mistake me for

a footman: but, you see, I only thought of my repartee some eight hours afterwards when I was lying in bed, and I am sorry to own that a great number of my best *bonmots* have been made in that way. So, as I had not the pungent remark ready when wanted, I can't say I said it to Captain Baker, but I dare say I turned very red, and said, "Sir!" and — and in fact that was all.

"You were goin' to say somethin'?" asked the Captain, affably.

"You know my friend Mr. Fitzboodle, I believe?" said I; the fact is, I really did not know what to say.

"Some mistake — think not."

"He is a member of the Flag Club," I remarked, looking my young fellow hard in the face.

"I ain't. There's a set of cads in that club that will say anything."

"You may not know him, sir, but he seemed to know you very well. Are we to have any tea, children?" I say, flinging myself down on an easy-chair, taking up a magazine, and adopting an easy attitude, though I dare say my face was as red as a turkey-cock's, and I was boiling over with rage.

As we had a very good breakfast and a profuse luncheon at Shrublands, of course we could not support nature till dinner-time without a five-o'clock tea; and this was the meal for which I pretended to ask. Bedford, with his silver kettle, and his buttony satellite, presently brought in this refection, and of course the children bawled out to him —

"Bedford — Bedford! Uncle mistook Mr. Batchelor for you."

"I could not be mistaken for a more honest man, Pop," said I. And the bearer of the tea-urn gave me a look of gratitude and kindness which, I own, went far to restore my ruffled equanimity.

"Since you are the butler, will you get me a glass of sherry and a biscuit?" says the Captain. And Bedford, retiring, returned presently with the wine.

The young gentleman's hand shook so, that, in order to drink his wine, he had to surprise it, as it were, and seize it with his mouth, when a shake brought the glass near his lips. He drained the wine, and held out his hand for another glass. The hand was steadier now.

"You the man who was here before?" asks the Captain.

"Six years ago, when you were here, sir," says the butler.

"What! I ain't changed, I suppose?"

"Yes, you are, sir."

"Then, how the dooce do you remember me?"

"You forgot to pay me some money you borrowed of me, one pound five, sir," says Bedford, whose eyes slyly turned in my direction.

And here, according to her wont at this meal, the dark-robed Miss Prior entered the room. She was coming forward with her ordinarily erect attitude and firm step, but paused in her walk an instant, and when she came to us, I thought, looked remarkably pale. She made a slight curtsy, and it must be confessed that Captain Baker rose up from his sofa for a moment when she appeared. She then sat down, with her back towards him, turning towards herself the table and its tea apparatus.

At this board my Lady Baker found us assembled when she returned from her afternoon drive. She flew to her darling reprobate of a son. She took his hand, she smoothed back his hair from his damp forehead. "My darling child," cries this fond mother, "what a pulse you have got!"

"I suppose, because I've been drinking," says the prodigal.

"Why did n't you come out driving with me? The afternoon was lovely!"

"To pay visits at Richmond? Not as I knows on, Ma'am," says the invalid. "Conversation with elderly ladies about poodles, Bible societies, that kind of thing? It must be a doosid lovely afternoon that would make me like that sort of game." And here comes a fit of coughing, over which mamma ejaculates her sympathy.

"Kick — kick — killin' myself!" gasps out the Captain; "know I am. No man *can* lead my life, and stand it. Dyin' by inches! Dyin' by whole yards, by Jo — ho — hove, I am!" Indeed, he was as bad in health as in morals, this graceless Captain.

"That man of Lovel's seems a d—— insolent beggar," he presently and ingenuously remarks.

"Oh, Uncle, you must n't say those words!" cries niece Cissy.

"He 's a man, and may say what he likes, and so will I, when I 'm a man. Yes, and I 'll say it now, too, if I like," cries Master Popham.

"Not to give me pain, Popham? Will you?" asks the governess.

On which the boy says — "Well, who wants to hurt you, Miss Prior?"

And our colloquy ends by the arrival of the man of the house from the city.

What I have admired in some dear women is their capacity for quarrelling and for reconciliation. As I saw Lady Baker hanging round her son's neck, and fondling his scanty ringlets, I remembered the awful stories with which in former days she used to entertain us regarding this reprobate. Her heart was pin-

cushioned with his filial crimes. Under her chestnut front her ladyship's real head of hair was gray, in consequence of his iniquities. His precocious appetite had devoured the greater part of her jointure. He had treated her many dangerous illnesses with indifference: had been the worst son, the worst brother, the most ill-conducted schoolboy, the most immoral young man — the terror of households, the Lovelace of garrison towns, the perverter of young officers; in fact, Lady Baker did not know how she supported existence at all under the agony occasioned by his crimes, and it was only from the possession of a more than ordinarily strong sense of religion that she was enabled to bear her burden.

The Captain himself explained these alternating maternal caresses and quarrels in his easy way.

"Saw how the old lady kissed and fondled me?" says he to his brother-in-law. "Quite refreshin', ain't it? Hang me, I thought she was goin' to send me a bit of sweetbread off her own plate. Came up to my room last night, wanted to tuck me up in bed, and abused my brother to me for an hour. You see, when I'm in favor, she always abuses Baker; when *he's* in favor she abuses me to him. And my sister-in-law, did n't she give it my sister-in-law! Oh! I'll trouble you! And poor Cecilia — why, hang me, Mr. Batchelor, she used to go on — this bottle's corked, I'm hanged if it is n't — to go on about Cecilia, and call her — Hullo!"

Here he was interrupted by our host, who said sternly —

"Will you please to forget those quarrels, or not mention them here? Will you have more wine, Batchelor?"

And Lovel rises, and haughtily stalks out of the

room. To do Lovel justice, he had a great contempt and dislike for his young brother-in-law, which, with his best magnanimity, he could not at all times conceal.

So our host stalks towards the drawing-room, leaving Captain Clarence sipping wine.

"Don't go, too," says the Captain. "He 's a confounded rum fellow, my brother-in-law is. He 's a confounded ill-conditioned fellow, too. They always are, you know, these tradesmen fellows, these half-bred uns. I used to tell my sister so; but she *would* have him, because he had such lots of money, you know. And she threw over a fellar she was very fond of; and I told her she 'd regret it. I told Lady B. she 'd regret it. It was all Lady B.'s doing. She made Cissy throw the fellar over. He was a bad match, certainly, Tom Mountain was; and not a clever fellow, you know, or that sort of thing; but, at any rate, he was a gentleman, and better than a confounded sugar-baking beggar out Ratcliff Highway."

"You seem to find that claret very good," I remark, speaking, I may say, Socratically, to my young friend, who had been swallowing bumper after bumper.

"Claret good! Yes, doosid good!"

"Well, you see our confounded sugar-baker gives you his best."

"And why should n't he, hang him? Why, the fellow chokes with money. What does it matter to him how much he spends? You 're a poor man, I dare say. You don't look as if you were overflush of money. Well, if *you* stood a good dinner, it would be all right — I mean it would show — you understand me, you know. But a sugar-baker with ten thousand a year, what does it matter to him, bottle of claret more — less?"

"Let us go in to the ladies," I say.

"Go in to Mother! *I* don't want to go in to my mother," cries out the artless youth. "And I don't want to go in to the sugar-baker, hang him! and I don't want to go in to the children; and I'd rather have a glass of brandy-and-water with you, old boy. Here you! What's your name? Bedford! I owe you five-and-twenty shillings, do I, old Bedford? Give us a glass of Schnaps, and I'll pay you! Look here, Batchelor. I hate that sugar-baker. Two years ago, I drew a bill on him, and he would n't pay it — perhaps he would have paid it, but my sister would n't let him. And, I say, shall we go and have a cigar in your room? My mother's been abusing you to me like fun this morning. She abuses everybody. She used to abuse Cissy. Cissy used to abuse her — used to fight like two cats —"

And if I narrate this conversation, dear Spartan youth! if I show thee this Helot maundering in his cups, it is that from his odious example thou mayst learn to be moderate in the use of thine own. Has the enemy who has entered thy mouth ever stolen away thy brains? Has wine ever caused thee to blab secrets; to utter egotisms and follies? Beware of it. Has it ever been thy friend at the end of the hard day's work, the cheery companion of thy companions, the promoter of harmony, kindness, harmless social pleasure? Be thankful for it. Three years since, when the comet was blazing in the autumnal sky, I stood on the château-steps of a great claret proprietor. "Boirai-je de ton vin, O comète?" I said, addressing the luminary with the flaming tail. "Shall those generous bunches which you ripen yield their juices for me *morituro?*" It was a solemn thought. Ah! my dear brethren! who knows the Order of the Fates?

When shall we pass the Gloomy Gates? Which of us goes, which of us waits to drink those famous Fifty-eights? A sermon, upon my word! And pray why not a little homily on an autumn eve over a purple cluster? — If that rickety boy had only drunk claret, I warrant you his tongue would not have blabbed, his hand would not have shaken, his wretched little brain and body would not have reeled with fever.

"'Gad," said he next day to me, "cut again last night. Have an idea that I abused Lovel. When I have a little wine on board, always speak my mind, don't you know? Last time I was here in my poor sister's time, said somethin' to her, don't quite know what it was, somethin' confoundedly true and unpleasant I dare say. I think it was about a fellow she used to go on with before she married the sugar-baker. And I got orders to quit, by Jove, sir — neck and crop, sir, and no mistake! And we gave it one another over the stairs. Oh, my! we did pitch in! — And that was the last time I ever saw Cecilia — give you my word. A doosid unforgiving woman my poor sister was, and between you and me, Batchelor, as great a flirt as ever threw a fellar over. You should have heard her and my Lady B. go on, that's all! — Well, Mamma, are you going out for a drive in the coachy-poachy? Not as I knows on, thank you, as I before had the honor to observe. Mr. Batchelor and me are going to play a little game at billiards." We did, and I won; and, from that day to this, have never been paid my little winnings.

On the day after the doughty captain's arrival, Miss Prior, in whose face I had remarked a great expression of gloom and care, neither made her appearance at breakfast nor at the children's dinner. "Miss Prior was a little unwell," Lady Baker said, with an

air of most perfect satisfaction. "Mr. Drencher will come to see her this afternoon, and prescribe for her, I dare say," adds her ladyship, nodding and winking a roguish eye at me. I was at a loss to understand what was the point of humor which amused Lady B., until she herself explained it.

"My good sir," she said, "I think Miss Prior is not at all *averse* to being ill." And the nods recommenced.

"As how?" I ask.

"To being ill, or at least to calling in the medical man."

"Attachment between governess and Sawbones, I make bold for to presume?" says the Captain.

"Precisely, Clarence — a very fitting match. I saw the affair, even before Miss Prior owned it — that is to say, she has not denied it. She says she can't afford to marry, that she has children enough at home in her brothers and sisters. She is a well-principled young woman, and does credit, Mr. Batchelor, to your recommendation, and the education she has received from her uncle, the master of St. Boniface."

"Cissy to school; Pop to Eton; and Miss What-d'-you-call to grind the pestle in Sawbones's back-shop: I see!" says Captain Clarence. "He seems a low, vulgar blackguard, that Sawbones."

"Of course, my love, what can you expect from that sort of person?" asks mamma, whose own father was a small attorney in a small Irish town.

"I wish I had his confounded good health," cries Clarence, coughing.

"My poor darling!" says mamma.

I said nothing. And so Elizabeth was engaged to that great, broad-shouldered, red-whiskered young surgeon with the huge appetite and the dubious *h's!* Well, why not? What was it to me? Why

should n't she marry him? Was he not an honest man, and a fitting match for her? Yes. Very good. Only if I *do* love a bird or flower to glad me with its dark blue eye, it is the first to fade away. If I *have* a partiality for a young gazelle it is the first to — psha! What have I to do with this namby-pamby? Can the heart that has truly loved ever forget, and does n't it as truly love on to the — stuff! I am past the age of such follies. I might have made a woman happy; I think I should. But the fugacious years have lapsed, my Posthumus! My waist is now a good bit wider than my chest, and it is decreed that I shall be alone!

My tone, then, when next I saw Elizabeth, was sorrowful — not angry. Drencher, the young doctor, came punctually enough, you may be sure, to look after his patient. Little Pinhorn, the children's maid, led the young practitioner smiling towards the schoolroom regions. His creaking highlows sprang swiftly up the stairs. I happened to be in the hall and surveyed him with a grim pleasure. "Now he is in the schoolroom," I thought. "Now he is taking her hand — it is very white — and feeling her pulse. And so on, and so on. Surely, surely Pinhorn remains in the room?" I am sitting on a hall-table as I muse plaintively on these things, and gaze up the stairs by which the Hakeem (great carroty-whiskered cad!) has passed into the sacred precincts of the harem. As I gaze up the stair, another door opens into the hall; a scowling face peeps through that door, and looks up the stair, too. 'T is Bedford, who has slid out of his pantry, and watches the doctor. And thou, too, my poor Bedford! Oh! the whole world throbs with vain heart-pangs, and tosses and heaves with longing, unfulfilled desires! All night,

and all over the world, bitter tears are dropping as regular as the dew, and cruel memories are haunting the pillow. Close my hot eyes, kind Sleep! Do not visit it, dear delusive images out of the Past! Often your figure shimmers through my dreams, Glorvina. Not as you are now, the stout mother of many children — you always had an alarming likeness to your own mother, Glorvina — but as you were — slim, black-haired, blue-eyed — when your carnation lips warbled the "Vale of Avoca" or the "Angel's Whisper." "What!" I say then, looking up the stair, "am I absolutely growing jealous of yon apothecary? — O fool!" And at this juncture, out peers Bedford's face from the pantry, and I see he is jealous too. I tie my shoe as I sit on the table; I don't affect to notice Bedford in the least (who, in fact, pops his own head back again as soon as he sees mine). I take my wide-awake from the peg, set it on one side my head, and strut whistling out of the hall-door. I stretch over Putney Heath, and my spirit resumes its tranquillity.

I sometimes keep a little journal of my proceedings, and on referring to its pages, the scene rises before me pretty clearly to which the brief notes allude. On this day I find noted: "*Friday, July 14. — B. came down to-day. Seems to require a great deal of attendance from Dr. — Row between dowagers after dinner.*" "B.," I need not remark, is Bessy. "Dr.," of course, you know. "Row between dowagers" means a battle royal between Mrs. Bonnington and Lady Baker, such as not unfrequently raged under the kindly Lovel's roof.

Lady Baker's gigantic menial Bulkeley condescended to wait at the family dinner at Shrublands, when perforce he had to put himself under Mr. Bed-

ford's orders. Bedford would gladly have dispensed with the London footman, over whose calves, he said, he and his boy were always tumbling; but Lady Baker's dignity would not allow her to part from her own man; and her good-natured son-in-law allowed her, and indeed almost all other persons, to have their own way. I have reason to fear Mr. Bulkeley's morals were loose. Mrs. Bonnington had a special horror of him; his behavior in the village public-houses, where his powder and plush were forever visible — his freedom of conduct and conversation before the good lady's nurse and parlor-maids — provoked her anger and suspicion. More than once she whispered to me her loathing of this flour-besprinkled monster; and, as much as such a gentle creature could, she showed her dislike to him by her behavior. The flunky's solemn equanimity was not to be disturbed by any such feeble indications of displeasure. From his powdered height, he looked down upon Mrs. Bonnington, and her esteem or her dislike was beneath him.

Now on this Friday night the 14th, Captain Clarence had gone to pass the day in town, and our Bessy made her appearance again, the doctor's prescriptions having, I suppose, agreed with her. Mr. Bulkeley, who was handing coffee to the ladies, chose to offer none to Miss Prior, and I was amused when I saw Bedford's heel scrunch down on the flunky's right foot, as he pointed towards the governess. The oaths which Bulkeley had to devour in silence must have been frightful. To do the gallant fellow justice, I think he would have died rather than speak before company in a drawing-room. He limped up and offered the refreshment to the young lady, who bowed and declined it.

"Frederick," Mrs. Bonnington begins, when the coffee-ceremony is over, "now the servants are gone, I must scold you about the waste at your table, my dear. What was the need of opening that great bottle of champagne? Lady Baker only takes two glasses. Mr. Batchelor does n't touch it." (No, thank you, my dear Mrs. Bonnington: too old a stager.) "Why not have a little bottle instead of that great, large, immense one? Bedford is a teetotaler. I suppose it is *that London footman who likes it.*"

"My dear mother, I have n't really ascertained his tastes," says Lovel.

"Then why not tell Bedford to open a pint, dear?" pursues mamma.

"Oh, Bedford — Bedford, we must not mention *him*, Mrs. Bonnington!" cries Lady Baker. "Bedford is faultless. Bedford has the keys of everything. Bedford is not to be controlled in anything. Bedford is to be at liberty to be rude to my servant."

"Bedford was admirably kind in his attendance on your daughter, Lady Baker," says Lovel, his brow darkening: "and as for your man, I should think he was big enough to protect himself from any rudeness of poor Dick!" The good fellow had been angry for one moment, at the next he was all for peace and conciliation.

Lady Baker puts on her superfine air. With that air she had often awe-stricken good, simple Mrs. Bonnington; and she loved to use it whenever city folks or humble people were present. You see she thought herself your superior and mine, as *de par le monde* there are many artless Lady Bakers who do. "My dear Frederick!" says Lady B. then, putting on her best Mayfair manner, "excuse me for saying,

but you don't know the — the class of servant to which Bulkeley belongs. I had him as a great favor from Lord Toddleby's. That — that class of servant is not generally accustomed to go out single."

"Unless they are two behind a carriage-perch they pine away, I suppose," remarks Mr. Lovel, "as one love-bird does without his mate."

"No doubt — no doubt," says Lady B., who does not in the least understand him; "I only say you are not accustomed here — in this kind of establishment, you understand — to that class of — "

But here Mrs. Bonnington could contain her wrath no more. "Lady Baker!" cries that injured mother, "is my son's establishment not good enough for any powdered wretch in England? Is the house of a British merchant — "

"My dear creature — my dear creature!" interposes her ladyship, "it *is* the house of a British merchant, and a most comfortable house too."

"Yes, *as you find it*," remarks mamma.

"Yes, as I find it, when I come to take care of that *departed angel's children*, Mrs. Bonnington!" — (Lady B. here indicates the Cecilian effigy) — "of that dear seraph's orphans, Mrs. Bonnington! *You* cannot. You have other duties — other children — a husband, whom you have left at home in delicate health, and who — "

"Lady Baker!" exclaims Mrs. Bonnington, "no one shall say I don't take care of my dear husband!"

"My dear Lady Baker! — my dear — dear mother!" cries Lovel, *éploré*, and whimpers aside to me, "They spar in this way every night, when we're alone. It's too bad, ain't it, Batch?"

"I say you *do* take care of Mr. Bonnington," Baker blandly resumes (she has hit Mrs. Bonnington on the

raw place, and smilingly proceeds to thong again): "I say you *do* take care of your husband, my dear creature, and that is why you can't attend to Frederick! And as he is of a very easy temper, — except sometimes with his poor Cecilia's mother, — he allows all his tradesmen to cheat him; all his servants to cheat him; Bedford to be rude to everybody; and if to me, why not to my servant Bulkeley, with whom Lord Toddleby's groom of the chambers gave me the very highest character?"

Mrs. Bonnington in a great flurry broke in by saying she was surprised to hear that noblemen *had* grooms in their chambers: and she thought they were much better in the stables: and when they dined with Captain Huff, you know, Frederick, *his* man always brought such a dreadful smell of the stable in with him, that — here she paused. Baker's eye was on her; and that dowager was grinning a cruel triumph.

"He! — he! You mistake, my good Mrs. Bonnington!" says her ladyship. "Your poor mother mistakes, my dear Frederick. You have lived in a quiet and most respectable sphere, but not, you understand, not —"

"Not what, pray, Lady Baker? We have lived in this neighborhood twenty years: in my late husband's time, when *we saw a great deal of company*, and this dear Frederick was a boy at Westminster School. And we have *paid* for everything we have had for twenty years; and we have not owed a penny to any *tradesman*. And we may not have had *powdered footmen*, six feet high, impertinent beasts, who were rude to all the maids in the place. Don't — I *will* speak, Frederick! But servants who loved us, and who were *paid their wages*, and who — o — ho — ho — ho!"

Wipe your eyes, dear friends! out with all your pocket-handkerchiefs. I protest I cannot bear to see a woman in distress. Of course Fred Lovel runs to console his dear old mother, and vows Lady Baker meant no harm.

"Meant harm! My dear Frederick, what harm can I mean? I only said your poor mother did not seem to know what a groom of the chambers was! How should she?"

"Come — come," says Frederick, "enough of this! Miss Prior, will you be so kind as to give us a little music?"

Miss Prior was playing Beethoven at the piano, very solemnly and finely, when our Black Sheep returned to this quiet fold, and, I am sorry to say, in a very riotous condition. The brilliancy of his eye, the purple flush on his nose, the unsteady gait, and uncertain tone of voice, told tales of Captain Clarence, who stumbled over more than one chair before he found a seat near me.

"Quite right, old boy," says he, winking at me. "Cut again — dooshid good fellosh. Better than being along with you shtoopid-old-fogish." And he began to warble wild "Fol-de-rol-lolls" in an insane accompaniment to the music.

"By heavens, this is too bad!" growls Lovel. "Lady Baker, let your big man carry your son to bed. Thank you, Miss Prior!"

At a final yell, which the unlucky young scapegrace gave, Elizabeth stopped, and rose from the piano, looking very pale. She made her curtsy, and was departing, when the wretched young captain sprang up, looked at her, and sank back on the sofa with another wild laugh. Bessy fled away scared, and white as a sheet.

"TAKE THE BRUTE TO BED!" roars the master of

the house, in great wrath. And scapegrace was conducted to his apartment, whither he went laughing wildly, and calling out, "Come on, old sh-ah-shugar-baker!"

The morning after this fine exhibition, Captain Clarence Baker's mamma announced to us that her poor dear suffering boy was too ill to come to breakfast, and I believe he prescribed for himself devilled drumstick and soda-water, of which he partook in his bedroom. Lovel, seldom angry, was violently wroth with his brother-in-law; and, almost always polite, was at breakfast scarcely civil to Lady Baker. I am bound to say that female abused her position. She appealed to Cecilia's picture a great deal too much during the course of breakfast. She hinted, she sighed, she waggled her head at me, and spoke about "that angel" in the most tragic manner. Angel is all very well: but your angel brought in *à tout propos;* your departed blessing called out of her grave ever so many times a day; when grandmamma wants to carry a point of her own; when the children are naughty, or noisy; when papa betrays a flickering inclination to dine at his club, or to bring home a bachelor friend or two to Shrublands; — I say your angel always dragged in by the wings into the conversation loses her effect. No man's heart put on wider crape than Lovel's at Cecilia's loss. Considering the circumstances, his grief was most creditable to him; but at breakfast, at lunch, about Bulkeley the footman, about the barouche or the phaeton, or any trumpery domestic perplexity, to have a *Deus intersit* was too much. And I observed, with some inward satisfaction, that when Baker uttered her pompous funereal phrases, rolled her eyes up to the ceiling, and appealed to that quarter, the children ate their jam and quarrelled and kicked their little shins under the

table, Lovel read his paper and looked at his watch to see if it was omnibus time; and Bessy made the tea, quite undisturbed by the old lady's tragical prattle.

When Baker described her son's fearful cough and dreadfully feverish state, I said, "Surely, Lady Baker, *Mr. Drencher* had better be sent for;" and I suppose I uttered the disgusting dissyllable Drencher with a fine sarcastic accent; for once, just once, Bessy's gray eyes rose through the spectacles and met mine with a glance of unutterable sadness, then calmly settled down on to the slop-basin again, or the urn, in which her pale features, of course, were odiously distorted.

"You will not bring anybody home to dinner, Frederick, in my poor boy's state?" asks Lady B.

"He may stay in his bed-room I suppose," replied Lovel.

"He is Cecilia's brother, Frederick!" cries the lady.

"Conf—" Lovel was beginning. What was he about to say?

"If you are going to confound your angel in heaven, I have nothing to say, sir!" cries the mother of Clarence.

"*Parbleu, Madame!*" cried Lovel in French; "if he were not my wife's brother, do you think I would let him stay here?"

"*Parly Français? Oui, oui, oui!*" cries Pop. "I know what Pa means!"

"And so do *I* know. And I shall lend Uncle Clarence some books which Mr. Bonnington gave me, and—"

"Hold your tongue all!" shouts Lovel, with a stamp of his foot.

"You will, perhaps, have the great kindness to allow me the use of your carriage—or, at least, to

wait here until my poor suffering boy can be moved, Mr. Lovel?" says Lady B., with the airs of a martyr.

Lovel rang the bell. "The carriage for Lady Baker — at her ladyship's hour, Bedford: and the cart for her luggage. Her ladyship and Captain Baker are going away."

"I have lost one child, Mr. Lovel, whom some people seem to forget. I am not going to murder another! I will not leave this house, sir, *unless you drive me from it by force*, until the medical man has seen my boy!" And here she and sorrow sat down again. She was always giving warning. She was always fitting the halter and traversing the cart, was Lady B., but she forever declined to drop the handkerchief and have the business over. I saw by a little shrug in Bessy's shoulders, what the governess's views were of the matter; and, in a word, Lady B. no more went away on this day, than she had done on forty previous days when she announced her intention of going. She would accept benefits, you see, but then she insulted her benefactors, and so squared accounts.

That great healthy, florid, scarlet-whiskered medical wretch came at about twelve, saw Mr. Baker and prescribed for him: and *of course* he must have a few words with Miss Prior, and inquire into the state of her health. Just as on the previous occasion, I happened to be in the hall when Drencher went up stairs; Bedford happened to be looking out of his pantry-door: I burst into a yell of laughter when I saw Dick's livid face — the sight somehow suited my savage soul.

No sooner was Medicus gone than Bessy, grave and pale, in bonnet and spectacles, came sliding down stairs. I do not mean down the banister, which was Pop's favorite method of descent; but slim, tall,

noiseless, in a nunlike calm, she swept down the steps. Of course, I followed her. And there was Master Bedford's nose peeping through the pantry-door at us, as we went out with the children. Pray, what business of *his* was it to be always watching anybody who walked with Miss Prior?

"So, Bessy," I said, "what report does Mr. — hem! — Mr. Drencher — give of the interesting invalid?"

"Oh, the most horrid! He says that Captain Baker has several times had a dreadful disease brought on by drinking, and that he is mad when he has it. He has delusions, sees demons, when he is in this state — wants to be watched."

"Drencher tells you everything?"

She says meekly: "He attends us when we are ill."

I remark, with fine irony: "He attends the whole family: he is always coming to Shrublands!"

"He comes very often," Miss Prior says gravely.

"And do you mean to say, Bessy," I cry, madly cutting off two or three heads of yellow broom with my stick — "do you mean to say a fellow like that, who drops his *h's* about the room, is a welcome visitor?"

"I should be very ungrateful if he were not welcome, Mr. Batchelor," says Miss Prior. "And call me by my surname, please — and he has taken care of all my family — and —"

"And, of course, of course, of course, Miss Prior!" say I, brutally; "and this is the way the world wags; and this is the way we are ill, and are cured; and we are grateful to the doctor that cures us!"

She nods her grave head. "You used to be kinder to me once, Mr. Batchelor, in old days — in your — in my time of trouble! Yes, my dear, that is a beautiful bit of broom! Oh, what a fine butterfly!" (Cecilia

scours the plain after the butterfly.) "You used to be kinder to me once — when we were both unhappy."

"I was unhappy," I say, "but I survived. I was ill, but I am now pretty well, thank you. I was jilted by a false, heartless woman. Do you suppose there are no other heartless women in the world?" And I am confident, if Bessy's breast had not been steel, the daggers which darted out from my eyes would have bored frightful stabs in it.

But she shook her head, and looked at me so sadly that my eye-daggers tumbled down to the ground at once; for you see, though I am a jealous Turk, I am a very easily appeased jealous Turk; and if I had been Bluebeard, and my wife, just as I was going to decapitate her, had lifted up her head from the block and cried a little, I should have dropped my scimitar, and said, "Come, come, Fatima, never mind for the present about that key and closet business, and I'll chop your head off some other morning." I say Bessy disarmed me. Pooh! I say, women will make a fool of me to the end. Ah! ye gracious Fates! Cut my thread of life ere it grow too long. Suppose I were to live till seventy, and some little wretch of a woman were to set her cap at me? She would catch me — I know she would. All the males of our family have been spooney and soft, to a degree perfectly ludicrous and despicable to contemplate — Well, Bessy Prior, putting a hand out, looked at me, and said —

"You are the oldest and best friend I have ever had, Mr. Batchelor — the only friend."

"Am I, Elizabeth?" I gasp, with a beating heart.

"Cissy is running back with a butterfly." (Our hands unlock.) "Don't you see the difficulties of my position? Don't you know that ladies are often jeal-

ous of governesses; and that unless — unless they imagined I was — I was favorable to Mr. Drencher, who is very good and kind — the ladies of Shrublands might not like my remaining alone in the house with — with — you understand?" A moment the eyes look over the spectacles: at the next, the meek bonnet bows down towards the ground.

I wonder did she hear the bump — bumping of my heart! O heart! — O wounded heart! did I ever think thou wouldst bump — bump again? "Egl — Egl — izabeth," I say, choking with emotion, "do, do, do you — te — tell me — you don't — don't — don't — lo — love that apothecary?"

She shrugs her shoulder — her charming shoulder.

"And if," I hotly continue, "if a gentleman — if a man of mature age certainly, but who has a kind heart and four hundred a year of his own — were to say to you, 'Elizabeth! will you bid the flowers of a blighted life to bloom again? — Elizabeth! will you soothe a wounded heart?' —"

"Oh, Mr. Batchelor!" she sighed, and then added quickly, "Please, don't take my hand. Here 's Pop."

And that dear child (bless him!) came up at the moment, saying, "Oh, Miss Prior, look here! I've got such a jolly big toadstool!" And next came Cissy, with a confounded butterfly. O Richard the Third! Have n't you been maligned because you smothered two little nuisances in a Tower? What is to prove to me that you did not serve the little brutes right, and that you were n't a most humane man? Darling Cissy coming up, then, in her dear, charming way, says, "You sha'n't take Mr. Batchelor's hand, you shall take *my* hand!" And she tosses up her little head, and walks with the instructress of her youth.

BESSY'S REFLECTIONS.

"Ces enfans ne comprennent guère le Français," says Miss Prior, speaking very rapidly.

"Après lonche?" I whisper. The fact is, I was so agitated I hardly knew what the French for lunch was. And then our conversation dropped: and the beating of my own heart was all the sound I heard.

Lunch came. I could n't eat a bit: I should have choked. Bessy ate plenty, and drank a glass of beer. It was her dinner, to be sure. Young *Blacksheep* did not appear. We did not miss him. When Lady Baker began to tell her story of George IV. at Slane Castle, I went into my own room. I took a book. Books? Psha! I went into the garden. I took out a cigar. But no, I would not smoke it. Perhaps she — many people don't like smoking.

I went into the garden. "Come into the garden, Maud." I sat by a large lilac-bush. I waited. Perhaps she would come? The morning-room windows were wide open on the lawn. Will she never come? Ah! what is that tall form advancing? gliding — gliding into the chamber like a beauteous ghost? "Who most does like an angel show, you may be sure 't is she." She comes up to the glass. She lays her spectacles down on the mantel-piece. She puts a slim white hand over her auburn hair and looks into the mirror. Elizabeth, Elizabeth! I come!

As I came up, I saw a horrid little grinning, debauched face surge over the back of a great arm-chair and look towards Elizabeth. It was Captain Blacksheep, of course. He laid his elbows over the chair. He looked keenly and with a diabolical smile at the unconscious girl; and just as I reached the window, he cried out, "*Bessy Bellenden, by Jove!*"

Elizabeth turned round, gave a little cry, and — but what happened I shall tell in the ensuing chapter."

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH I AM STUNG BY A SERPENT.

If, when I heard Baker call out Bessy Bellenden, and adjure Jove, he had run forward and seized Elizabeth by the waist, or offered her other personal indignity, I too should have run forward on my side and engaged him. Though I am a stout elderly man, short in stature and in wind, I know I am a match for *that* rickety little captain on his high-heeled boots. A match for him? I believe Miss Bessy would have been a match for both of us. Her white arm was as hard and polished as ivory. Had she held it straight pointed against the rush of the dragoon, he would have fallen backwards before his intended prey: I have no doubt he would. It was the hen, in this case, was stronger than the libertine fox, and *au besoin* would have pecked the little marauding vermin's eyes out. Had, I say, Partlet been weak, and Reynard strong, I *would* have come forward: I certainly would. Had he been a wolf now, instead of a fox, I am certain I should have run in upon him, grappled with him, torn his heart and tongue out of his black throat, and trampled the lawless brute to death.

Well, I did n't do any such thing. I was just *going* to run in, — and I did n't. I was just going to rush to Bessy's side to clasp her (I have no doubt) to my heart: to beard the whiskered champion who was before her, and perhaps say, "Cheer thee — cheer thee, my persecuted maiden, my beauteous love — my

Rebecca! Come on, Sir Brian de Bois Guilbert, thou dastard Templar! It is I, Sir Wilfrid of Ivanhoe." (By the way, though the fellow was not a *Templar*, he was a *Lincoln's-Inn man*, having passed twice through the Insolvent Court there with infinite discredit.) But I made no heroic speeches. There was no need for Rebecca to jump out of window and risk her lovely neck. How could she, in fact, the French window being flush with the ground-floor? And I give you my honor, just as I was crying my war-cry, couching my lance, and rushing *à la recousse* upon Sir Baker, a sudden thought made me drop my (figurative) point: a sudden idea made me rein in my galloping (metaphorical) steed and spare Baker for that time.

Suppose I had gone in? But for that sudden precaution, there might have been a Mrs. Batchelor. I might have been a bullied father of ten children. (Elizabeth has a fine high temper of her own.) What is four hundred and twenty a year, with a wife and perhaps half a dozen children? Should I have been a whit the happier? Would Elizabeth? Ah! no. And yet I feel a certain sort of shame, even now, when I think that I did n't go in. Not that I was in a fright, as some people choose to hint. I swear I was not. But the reason why I did not charge was this —

Nay, I *did* charge part of the way, and then, I own, stopped. It was an error in judgment. It was n't a want of courage. Lord George Sackville was a brave man, and as cool as a cucumber under fire. Well, *he* did n't charge at the battle of Minden, and Prince Ferdinand made the deuce and all of a disturbance, as we know. Byng was a brave man, — and I ask, was n't it a confounded shame executing him? So with respect to myself. Here is my statement. I

make it openly. I don't care. I am accused of seeing a woman insulted, and not going to her rescue. I am not guilty, I say. That is, there were reasons which caused me not to attack. Even putting aside the superior strength of Elizabeth herself to the enemy, — I vow there were cogent and honorable reasons why I did not charge home.

You see I happened to be behind a blue lilac-bush (and was turning a rhyme — heaven help us! — in which *death* was only to part me and Elizabeth) when I saw Baker's face surge over the chair-back. I rush forward as he cries "by Jove." Had Miss Prior cried out on her part, the strength of twenty Heenans, I know, would have nerved this arm; but all she did was to turn pale, and say, "Oh, mercy! Captain Baker! Do pity me!"

"What! you remember me, Bessy Bellenden, do you?" asks the Captain, advancing.

"Oh, not that name! please, not that name!" cries Bessy.

"I thought I knew you yesterday," says Baker. "Only, gad, you see, I had so much claret on board, I did not much know what was what. And oh! Bessy, I have got such a splitter of a headache."

"Oh! please — please, my name is Miss Prior. Pray! pray, sir, don't —"

"You 've got handsomer — doosid deal handsomer. Know you now well, your spectacles off. You come in here, — teach my nephew and niece, humbug my sister, make love to the sh— Oh! you uncommon sly little toad!"

"Captain Baker! I beg — I implore you," says Bessy, or something of the sort: for the white hands assumed an attitude of supplication.

"Pooh! don't gammon *me!*" says the rickety Cap-

tain (or words to that effect), and seizes those two firm white hands in his moist, trembling palms.

Now do you understand why I paused? When the dandy came grinning forward, with looks and gestures of familiar recognition: when the pale Elizabeth implored him to spare her: — a keen arrow of jealousy shot whizzing through my heart, and caused me well-nigh to fall backwards as I ran forwards. I bumped up against a bronze group in the garden. The group represented a lion stung by a serpent. *I* was a lion stung by a serpent too. Even Baker could have knocked me down. Fiends and anguish! he had known her before. The Academy, the life she had led, the wretched old tipsy ineffective guardian of a father — all these antecedents in poor Bessy's history passed through my mind. And I had offered my heart and troth to this woman! Now, my dear sir, I appeal to you. What would *you* have done? Would *you* have liked to have such a sudden suspicion thrown over the being of your affection? "Oh! spare me — spare me!" I heard her say, in clear — too clear — pathetic tones. And then there came rather a shrill "Ah!" and then the lion was up in my breast again; and I give you my honor, just as I was going to step forward — to step? — to *rush* forward from behind the urn where I had stood for a moment with thumping heart, Bessy's "Ah!" or little cry was followed by a *whack*, which I heard as clear as anything I ever heard in my life; — and I saw the little Captain spin back, topple over a chair heels up, and in this posture heard him begin to scream and curse in shrill tones.

Not for long, for as the Captain and the chair tumble down, a door springs open; — a man rushes in, who pounces like a panther upon the prostrate

Captain, pitches into his nose and eyes, and chokes his bad language by sending a fist down his naughty throat.

"Oh! thank you, Bedford! — please leave him, Bedford! that 's enough. There, don't hurt him any more!" says Bessy, laughing — laughing, upon my word.

"Ah! will you?" says Bedford. "Lie still, you little beggar, or I 'll knock your head off. Look here, Miss Prior! — Elizabeth — dear — dear Elizabeth! I love you with all my heart, and soul, and strength — I do."

"O Bedford! Bedford!" warbles Elizabeth.

"I do! I can't help it. I must say it! Ever since Rome, I do. Lie still, you drunken little beast! It 's no use. But I adore you, O Elizabeth! Elizabeth!" And there was Dick, who was always following Miss P. about, and poking his head into keyholes to spy her, actually making love to her over the prostrate body of the Captain.

Now, what was I to do? Was n't I in a most confoundedly awkward situation? A lady had been attacked — *a* lady? — *the* lady, and I had n't rescued her. Her insolent enemy was overthrown, and I had n't done it. A champion, three inches shorter than myself, had come in and dealt the blow. I was in such a rage of mortification, that I should have liked to thrash the Captain and Bedford too. The first I know I could have matched: the second was a tough little hero. And it was he who rescued the damsel, whilst I stood by! In a strait so odious, sudden, and humiliating, what should I, what could I, what did I do?

Behind the lion and snake there is a brick wall and marble balustrade, built for no particular reason, but

BEDFORD TO THE RESCUE.

flanking three steps and a grassy terrace, which then rises up on a level to the house-windows. Beyond the balustrade is a shrubbery of more lilacs and so forth, by which you can walk round into another path, which also leads up to the house. So as I had not charged — ah! woe is me! — as the battle was over, I — I just went round that shrubbery into the other path, and so entered the house, arriving like Fortinbras in "Hamlet," when everybody is dead and sprawling, you know, and the whole business is done.

And was there to be no end to my shame, or to Bedford's laurels? In that brief interval, whilst I was walking round the bypath (just to give myself a pretext for entering coolly into the premises), this fortunate fellow had absolutely engaged another and larger champion. This was no other than Bulkeley, my Lady B.'s first-class attendant. When the Captain fell, amidst his screams and curses, he called for Bulkeley: and that individual made his appearance, with a little Scotch cap perched on his powdered head.

"Hullo! what's the row year?" says Goliath, entering.

"Kill that blackguard! Hang him, kill him!" screams Captain Blacksheep, rising with bleeding nose.

"I say, what's the row year?" asks the grenadier.

"Off with your cap, sir, before a lady!" calls out Bedford.

"Hoff with my cap! you be blo —"

But he said no more, for little Bedford jumped some two feet from the ground, and knocked the cap off, so that a cloud of ambrosial powder filled the room with violet odors. The immense frame of the giant

shook at this insult: "I will be the death on you, you little beggar!" he grunted out; and was advancing to destroy Dick, just as I entered in the cloud which his head had raised.

"I'll knock the brains as well as the powder out of your ugly head!" says Bedford, springing at the poker. At which juncture I entered.

"What — what is this disturbance?" I say, advancing with an air of mingled surprise and resolution.

"You git out of the way till I knock his 'ead off!" roars Bulkeley.

"Take up your cap, sir, and leave the room," I say, still with the same elegant firmness.

"Put down that there poker, you coward!" bellows the monster on board wages.

"Miss Prior!" I say (like a dignified hypocrite, as I own I was), "I hope no one has offered you a rudeness?" And I glare round, first at the knight of the bleeding nose, and then at his squire.

Miss Prior's face, as she replied to me, wore a look of awful scorn.

"Thank you, sir," she said, turning her head over her shoulder, and looking at me with her gray eyes. "Thank you, Richard Bedford! God bless you! I shall ever be thankful to you, wherever I am." And the stately figure swept out of the room.

She had seen me behind that confounded statue, then, and I had not come to her! O torments and racks! O scorpions, fiends, and pitchforks! The face of Bedford, too (flashing with knightly gratitude anon as she spoke kind words to him and passed on), wore a look of scorn as he turned towards me, and then stood, his nostrils distended, and breathing somewhat hard, glaring at his enemies, and still grasping his mace of battle.

When Elizabeth was gone, there was a pause of a moment, and then Blacksheep, taking his bleeding cambric from his nose, shrieks out, "Kill him, I say! A fellow that dares to hit one in my condition, and when I'm down! Bulkeley, you great hulking jackass! kill him, I say!"

"Jest let him put that there poker down, that's hall," growls Bulkeley.

"You're afraid, you great cowardly beast! You shall go; Mr. What-d'-ye-call-'im — Mr. Bedford — you shall have the sack, sir, as sure as your name is what it is! I'll tell my brother-in-law everything; and as for that woman —"

"If you say a word against her, I'll cane you wherever I see you, Captain Baker!" I cry out.

"Who spoke to *you?*" says the Captain, falling back and scowling at me.

"Who hever told you to put *your* foot in?" says the squire.

I was in such a rage, and so eager to find an object on which I might wreak my fury, that I confess I plunged at this Bulkeley. I gave him two most violent blows on the waistcoat, which caused him to double up with such frightful contortions, that Bedford burst out laughing; and even the Captain with the damaged eye and nose began to laugh too. Then, taking a lesson from Dick, as there was a fine shining dagger on the table, used for the cutting open of reviews and magazines, I seized and brandished this weapon, and I dare say would have sheathed it in the giant's bloated corpus, had he made any movement towards me. But he only called out, "hI'll be the death on you, you cowards! hI'll be the death of both on you!" and snatching up his cap from the carpet, walked out of the room.

"Glad you did that, though," says Baker, nodding his head. "Think I 'd best pack up."

And now the Devil of Rage which had been swelling within me gave place to a worse devil — the Devil of Jealousy — and I turned on the Captain, who was also just about to slink away: —

"Stop!" I cried out — I screamed out, I may say.

"Who spoke to you, I should like to know? and who the dooce dares to speak to me in that sort of way?" says Clarence Baker, with a plentiful garnish of expletives, which need not be here inserted. But he stopped, nevertheless, and turned slouching round.

"You spoke just now of Miss Prior?" I said. "Have you anything against her?"

"What 's that to you?" he asked.

"I am her oldest friend. I introduced her into this family. *Dare* you say a word against her?"

"Well, who the dooce has!"

"You knew her before?"

"Yes, I did, then."

"When she went by the name of Bellenden?"

"Of course I did. And what 's that to you?" he screams out.

"I this day asked her to be my wife, sir! *That 's* what it is to me!" I replied with severe dignity.

Mr. Clarence began to whistle. "Oh! if that 's it — of course not!" he says.

The jealous demon writhed within me and rent me.

"You mean that there *is* something, then?" I asked, glaring at the young reprobate.

"No, I don't," says he, looking very much frightened. "No, there is nothin'. Upon my sacred honor, there is n't, that I know." (I was looking uncommonly fierce at this time, and, I must own, would rather have quarrelled with somebody than not.)

"No, there is nothin' that I know. Ever so many years ago, you see, I used to go with Tom Papillion, Turkington, and two or three fellows, to that theatre. Dolphin had it. And we used to go behind the scenes — and — and I own I had a row with her. And I was in the wrong. There now, I own I was. And she left the theatre. And she behaved quite right. And I was very sorry. And I believe she is as good a woman as ever stepped now. And the father was a disreputable old man, but most honorable — I know he was. And there was a fellow in the Bombay service — a fellow by the name of Walker or Walkingham — yes, Walkingham; and I used to meet him at the 'Cave of Harmony,' you know; and he told me that she was as right as right could be. And he was doosidly cut up about leaving her. And he would have married her, I dessay, only for his father the General, who would n't stand it. And he was ready to hang himself when he went away. He used to drink awfully, and then he used to swear about her; and we used to chaff him, you know. Low, vulgarish sort of man he was; and a very passionate fellow. And if you 're goin' to marry her, you know — of course, I ask your pardon, and that; and upon the honor of a gentleman I know nothin' against her. And I wish you joy and all that sort of thing. I do now, really now!" And so saying, the mean, mischievous little monkey sneaked away, and clambered up to his own perch in his own bed-room.

Worthy Mrs. Bonnington, with a couple of her young ones, made her appearance at this juncture. She had a key, which gave her a free pass through the garden door, and brought her children for an afternoon's play and fighting with their little nephew and niece. Decidedly, Bessy did not bring up her

young folks well. Was it that their grandmothers spoiled them, and undid the governess's work? Were those young people odious (as they often were) by nature, or rendered so by the neglect of their guardians? If Bessy had loved her charges more, would they not have been better? Had she a kind, loving, maternal heart? Ha! This thought — this jealous doubt — smote my bosom: and were she mine, and the mother of many possible little Batchelors, would she be kind to *them?* Would they be wilful, and selfish, and abominable little wretches, in a word, like these children? Nay — nay! Say that Elizabeth has but a cold heart; we cannot be all perfection. But, *per contra*, you must admit that, cold as she is, she does her duty. How good she has been to her own brothers and sisters: how cheerfully she has given away her savings to them: how admirably she has behaved to her mother, hiding the iniquities of that disreputable old schemer, and covering her improprieties with decent filial screens and pretexts. Her mother? *Ah! grands dieux!* You want to marry, Charles Batchelor, and you will have that greedy pauper for a mother-in-law; that fluffy Bluecoat boy, those hobnailed taw-players, top-spinners, toffee-eaters, those underbred girls, for your brothers and sisters-in-law! They will be quartered upon you. You are so absurdly weak and good-natured — you know you are — that you will never be able to resist. Those boys will grow up: they will go out as clerks or shop-boys: get into debt, and expect you to pay their bills: want to be articled to attorneys and so forth, and call upon you for the premium. Their mother will never be out of your house. She will ferret about in your drawers and wardrobes, filch your haberdashery, and cast greedy eyes on the very

shirts and coats on your back, and calculate when she can get them for her boys. Those vulgar young miscreants will never fail to come and dine with you on a Sunday. They will bring their young linendraper or articled friends. They will draw bills on you, or give their own to money-lenders, and unless you take up those bills they will consider you a callous, avaricious brute, and the heartless author of their ruin. The girls will come and practise on your wife's piano. *They* won't come to you on Sundays only; they will always be staying in the house. They will always be preventing a *tête-à-tête* between your wife and you. As they grow old, they will want her to take them out to tea-parties, and to give such entertainments, where they will introduce their odious young men. They will expect you to commit meannesses, in order to get theatre tickets for them from the newspaper editors of your acquaintance. You will have to sit in the back seat: to pay the cab to and from the play: to see glances and bows of recognition passing between them and dubious bucks in the lobbies: and to lend the girls your wife's gloves, scarfs, ornaments, smelling-bottles, and handkerchiefs, which of course they will never return. If Elizabeth is ailing from any circumstance, they will get a footing in your house, and she will be jealous of them. The ladies of your own family will quarrel with them of course; and very likely your mother-in-law will tell them a piece of her mind. And you bring this dreary certainty upon you, because, forsooth, you fall in love with a fine figure, a pair of gray eyes, and a head of auburn (not to say red) hair! O Charles Batchelor! in what a galley hast thou seated thyself, and what a family is crowded in thy boat!

All these thoughts are passing in my mind, as good

Mrs. Bonnington is prattling to me — I protest I don't know about what. I think I caught some faint sentences about the Patagonian mission, the National schools, and Mr. Bonnington's lumbago; but I can't say for certain. I was busy with my own thoughts. I had asked the awful question — I was not answered. Bessy had even gone away in a huff about my want of gallantry, but I was easy on that score. As for Mr. Drencher, she had told me her sentiments regarding him; "and though I am considerably older, yet," thought I, "I need not be afraid of *that* rival. But when she says *yes?* Oh, dear! oh, dear! *Yes* means Elizabeth — certainly, a brave young woman — but it means Mrs. Prior, and Gus, and Amelia Jane, and the whole of that dismal family." No wonder, with these dark thoughts crowding my mind, Mrs. Bonnington found me absent; and, as a comment upon some absurd reply of mine, said, "La! Mr. Batchelor, you must be crossed in love?" Crossed in love! It might be as well for some folks if they *were* crossed in love. At my age, and having loved madly, as I did, that party in Dublin, a man does n't take the second fit by any means so strongly. Well! well! the die was cast, and I was there to bide the hazard. What can be the matter? I look pale and unwell, and had better see Mr. D.? Thank you, my dear Mrs. Bonnington. I had a violent — a violent toothache last night — yes, toothache; and was kept awake, thank you. And there 's nothing like having it out? and Mr. D. draws them beautifully, and has taken out six of your children's? It 's better now; I dare say it will be better still, soon. I retire to my chamber: I take a book — can't read one word of it. I resume my tragedy. Tragedy? Bosh!

I suppose Mr. Drencher thought his yesterday's

patient would be better for a little more advice and medicine, for he must pay a second visit to Shrublands on this day, just after the row with the Captain had taken place, and walked up to the upper regions, as his custom was. Very likely he found Mr. Clarence bathing his nose there, and prescribed for the injured organ. Certainly he knocked at the door of Miss Prior's schoolroom (the fellow was always finding a pretext for entering *that* apartment), and Master Bedford comes to me, with a woe-begone, livid countenance, and a "Ha! ha! young Sawbones is up with her!"

"So, my poor Dick," I say, "I heard your confession as I was myself running in to rescue Miss P. from that villain."

"My blood was hup," groans Dick, — "up, I beg your pardon. When I saw that young rascal lay a hand on her I could not help flying at him. I would have hit him if he had been my own father. And I could not help saying what was on my mind. It would come out; I knew it would some day. I might as well wish for the moon as hope to get her. She thinks herself superior to me, and perhaps she is mistaken. But it 's no use; she don't care for me; she don't care for anybody. Now the words are out, in course I must n't stay here."

"You may get another place easily enough with your character, Bedford!"

But he shook his head. "I 'm not disposed to black nobody else's boots no more. I have another place. I have saved a bit of money. My poor old mother is gone, whom you used to be so kind to, Mr. B. I 'm alone now. Confound that Sawbones, will he *never* come away? I 'll tell you about my plans some day, sir, and I know you 'll be so good as to help me."

And away goes Dick, looking the picture of woe and despair.

Presently, from the upper rooms, Sawbones descends. I happened to be standing in the hall, you see, talking to Dick. Mr. Drencher scowls at me fiercely, and I suppose I return him haughty glance for glance. He hated me: I him: I liked him to hate me.

"How is your patient, Mr. — a — Drencher?" I ask.

"Trifling contusion of the nose — brown paper and vinegar," says the doctor.

"Great powers! did the villain strike her on the nose?" I cry in terror.

"*Her* — whom?" says he.

"Oh — ah — yes — indeed; it's nothing," I say, smiling. The fact is I had forgotten about Baker in my natural anxiety for Elizabeth.

"I don't know what you mean by laughing, sir?" says the red-haired practitioner. "But if you mean chaff, Mr. Batchelor, let me tell you I don't want chaff, and I won't have chaff!" and herewith, exit Sawbones, looking black doses at me.

Jealous of me, think I, as I sink down in a chair in the morning-room, where the combat had just taken place. And so thou, too, art fever-caught my poor physician! What a fascination this girl has! Here's the butler: here's the medical man: here am I: here is the Captain has been smitten — smitten on the nose. Has the gardener been smitten too, and is the page gnawing his buttons off for jealousy, and is Mons. Bulkeley equally in love with her? I take up a review, and think over this, as I glance through its pages.

As I am lounging and reading, Mons. Bulkeley himself makes his appearance, bearing in cloaks and

packages belonging to his lady. "Have the goodness to take that cap off," I say, coolly.

"*You* 'ave the goodness to remember that if hever I see you hout o' this 'ouse I'll punch your hugly 'ead off," says the monstrous menial. But I poise my paper-cutter, and he retires growling.

From despondency I pass to hope; and the prospect of marriage, which before appeared so dark to me, assumes a gayer hue. I have four hundred a year, and that house in Devonshire Street, Bloomsbury Square, of which the upper part will be quite big enough for us. If we have children, there is Queen Square for them to walk and play in. Several genteel families I know, who still live in the neighborhood, will come and see my wife, and we shall have a comfortable, cosy little society, suited to our small means. The tradesmen in Lamb's Conduit Street are excellent, and the music at the Foundling always charming. I shall give up one of my clubs. The other is within an easy walk.

No: my wife's relations will *not* plague me. Bessy is a most sensible, determined woman, and as cool a hand as I know. She will only see Mrs. Prior at proper (and, I trust, distant) intervals. Her brothers and sisters will learn to know their places, and not obtrude upon me or the company which I keep. My friends, who are educated people and gentlemen, will not object to visit me because I live over a shop (my ground-floor and spacious back premises in Devonshire Street are let to a German toy-warehouse). I shall add a hundred or two at least to my income by my literary labor; and Bessy, who has practised frugality all her life, and been a good daughter and a good sister, I know will prove a good wife, and, please heaven! a good mother. Why, four hundred a year,

plus two hundred, is a nice little income. And my old college friend, Wigmore, who is just on the Bench? He will, he must get me a place — say three hundred a year. With nine hundred a year we can do quite well.

Love is full of elations and despondencies. The future, over which such a black cloud of doubt lowered a few minutes since, blushed a sweet rose-color now. I saw myself happy, beloved, with a competence, and imagined myself reposing in the delightful garden of Red Lion Square on some summer evening, and half a dozen little Batchelors frisking over the flower-bespangled grass there.

After our little colloquy, Mrs. Bonnington, not finding much pleasure in my sulky society, had gone to Miss Prior's room with her young folks, and as the door of the morning-room opened now and again, I could hear the dear young ones scuttling about the passages, where they were playing at horses, and fighting, and so forth. After a while good Mrs. B. came down from the schoolroom. "Whatever has happened, Mr. Batchelor?" she said to me, in her passage through the morning-room. "Miss Prior is very pale and absent. *You* are very pale and absent. Have you been courting her, you naughty man, and trying to supplant Mr. Drencher? There now, you turn as red as my ribbon! Ah! Bessy is a good girl, and *so* fond of my dear children. 'Ah, dear Mrs. Bonnington,' she says to me — but of course you won't tell Lady B.: it would make Lady B. perfectly furious. 'Ah!' says Miss P. to me, 'I wish, ma'am, that my little charges were like their dear little uncles and aunts — so exquisitely brought up!' Pop again wished to beat his uncle. I wish — I wish Frederick would send that child to school! Miss P. owns that

he is too much for her. Come, children, it is time to go to dinner." And, with more of this prattle, the good lady summons her young ones, who descend from the schoolroom with their nephew and niece.

Following nephew and niece, comes demure Miss Prior, to whom I fling a knowing glance, which says, plain as eyes can speak — Do, Elizabeth, come and talk for a little to your faithful Batchelor! She gives a sidelong look of intelligence, leaves a parasol and a pair of gloves on a table, accompanies Mrs. Bonnington and the young ones into the garden, sees the clergyman's wife and children disappear through the garden gate, and her own youthful charges engaged in the strawberry-beds; and, of course, returns to the morning-room for her parasol and gloves, which she had forgotten. There is a calmness about that woman — an easy, dauntless dexterity, which frightens me — *ma parole d'honneur*. In that white breast is there a white marble stone in place of the ordinary cordial apparatus? Under the white velvet glove of that cool hand are there bones of cold steel?

"So, Drencher has again been here, Elizabeth?" I say.

She shrugs her shoulders. "To see that wretched Captain Baker. The horrid little man will die! He was not actually sober just now when he — when I — when you saw him. How I wish you had come sooner — to prevent that horrible, tipsy, disreputable quarrel. It makes me very, very thoughtful, Mr. Batchelor. He will speak to his mother — to Mr. Lovel. I shall have to go away. I know I must."

"And don't you know where you can find a home, Elizabeth? Have the words I spoke this morning been so soon forgotten?"

"Oh! Mr. Batchelor! you spoke in a heat. You

could not think seriously of a poor girl like me, so friendless and poor, with so many family ties. Pop is looking this way, please. To a man bred like you, what can I be?"

"You may make the rest of my life happy, Elizabeth!" I cry. "We are friends of such old — old date, that you know what my disposition is."

"Oh! indeed," says she, "it is certain that there never was a sweeter disposition or a more gentle creature." (Somehow I thought she said the words "gentle creature" with rather a sarcastic tone of voice.) "But consider your habits, dear sir. I remember how in Beak Street you used to be always giving, and, in spite of your income, always poor. You love ease and elegance; and having, I dare say, not too much for yourself now, would you encumber yourself with — with me and the expenses of a household? I shall always regard you, esteem you, love you as the best friend I ever had, and — *voici venir la mère du vaurien.*"

Enter Lady Baker. "Do I interrupt a *tête-à-tête*, pray?" she asks.

"My benefactor has known me since I was a child, and befriended me since then," says Elizabeth, with simple kindness beaming in her look. "We were just speaking — I was just — ah! — telling him that my uncle has invited me most kindly to St. Boniface, whenever I can be spared; and if you and the family go to the Isle of Wight this autumn, perhaps you will intercede with Mr. Lovel, and let me have a little holiday. Mary will take every charge of the children, and I do so long to see my dear aunt and cousins! And I was begging Mr. Batchelor to use his interest with you, and to entreat you to use *your* interest to get me leave. That was what our talk was about."

The deuce it was! I could n't say No, of course; but I protest I had no idea until that moment that our conversation had been about aunt and uncle at St. Boniface. Again came the horrible suspicion, the dreadful doubt — the chill as of a cold serpent crawling down my back — which had made me pause, and gasp, and turn pale, anon when Bessy and Captain Clarence were holding colloquy together. What *has* happened in this woman's life? *Do* I know all about her, or anything; or only just as much as she chooses? O Batch — Batch! I suspect you are no better than an old gaby!

"And Mr. Drencher has just been here and seen your son," Bessy continues, softly; "and he begs and entreats your ladyship to order Captain Baker to be more prudent. Mr. D. says Captain Baker is shortening his life, indeed he is, by his carelessness."

There is Mr. Lovel coming from the city, and the children are running to their papa! And Miss Prior makes her patroness a meek curtsy, and demurely slides away from the room. With a sick heart I say to myself, "She has been — yes — humbugging is the word — humbugging Lady B. Elizabeth! Elizabeth! can it be possible thou art humbugging *me* too?"

Before Lovel enters, Bedford rapidly flits through the room. He looks as pale as a ghost. His face is awfully gloomy.

"Here 's the governor come," Dick whispers to me. "It must all come hout now — out, I beg your pardon. So she 's caught *you*, has she? I thought she would." And he grins a ghastly grin.

"What do you mean?" I ask, and I dare say turn rather red.

"I know all about it. I 'll speak to you to-night,

sir. Confound her! confound her!" and he doubles his knuckles into his eyes, and rushes out of the room over Buttons entering with the afternoon tea.

"What on earth's the matter, and why are you knocking the things about?" Lovel asks at dinner of his butler, who, indeed, acted as one distraught. A savage gloom was depicted on Bedford's usually melancholy countenance, and the blunders in his service were many. With his brother-in-law Lovel did not exchange many words. Clarence was not yet forgiven for his escapade two days previous. And when Lady Baker cried, "Mercy, child! what have you done to yourself?" and the Captain replied, "Knocked my face against a dark door — made my nose bleed," Lovel did not look up or express a word of sympathy. "If the fellow knocked his worthless head off, I should not be sorry," the widower murmured to me. Indeed, the tone of the Captain's voice, his *ton*, and his manners in general, were specially odious to Mr. Lovel, who could put up with the tyranny of women, but revolted against the vulgarity and assumption of certain men.

As yet nothing had been said about the morning's quarrel. Here we were all sitting with a sword hanging over our heads, smiling and chatting, and talking cookery, politics, the weather, and what not. Bessy was perfectly cool and dignified at tea. Danger or doubt did not seem to affect *her*. If she had been ordered for execution at the end of the evening she would have made the tea, played her Beethoven, answered questions in her usual voice, and glided about from one to another with her usual dignified calm, until the hour of decapitation came, when she would have made her curtsy, and gone out, and had the amputation performed quite quietly and neatly. I

admired her, I was frightened before her. The cold snake crept more than ever down my back as I meditated on her. I made such awful blunders at whist that even good Mrs. Bonnington lost her temper with her fourteen shillings. Miss Prior would have played her hand out, and never made a fault, you may be sure. She retired at her accustomed hour. Mrs. Bonnington had her glass of negus, and withdrew too. Lovel keeping his eyes sternly on the Captain, that officer could only get a little sherry and seltzer, and went to bed sober. Lady Baker folded Lovel in her arms, a process to which my poor friend very humbly submitted. Everybody went to bed, and no tales were told of the morning's doings. There was a respite, and no execution could take place till to-morrow at any rate. Put on thy nightcap, Damocles, and slumber for to-night at least. Thy slumbers will not be cut short by the awful Chopper of Fate.

Perhaps you may ask what need had *I* to be alarmed? Nothing could happen to me. I was not going to lose a governess's place. Well, if I must tell the truth, I had not acted with entire candor in the matter of Bessy's appointment. In recommending her to Lovel and the late Mrs L., I had answered for her probity, and so forth, with all my might. I had described the respectability of her family, her father's campaigns, her grandfather's (old Dr. Sargent's) celebrated sermons; and had enlarged with the utmost eloquence upon the learning and high character of her uncle, the Master of Boniface, and the deserved regard he bore his niece. But that part of Bessy's biography which related to the Academy I own I had not touched upon. *A quoi bon?* Would every gentleman or lady like to have everything told about him or her? I had kept the Academy dark then; and so had brave Dick Bed-

ford the butler; and should that miscreant Captain reveal the secret, I knew there would be an awful commotion in the building. I should have to incur Lovel's not unjust reproaches for *suppressio veri*, and the anger of those two *viragines*, the grandmothers of Lovel's children. I was more afraid of the women than of him, though conscience whispered me that I had not acted quite rightly by my friend.

When, then, the bed-candles were lighted, and every one said good-night, "Oh! Captain Baker," say I, gayly, and putting on a confoundedly hypocritical grin, "if you will come into my room, I will give you that book."

"What book?" says Baker.

"The book we were talking of this morning."

"Hang me, if I know what you mean," says he. And luckily for me, Lovel, giving a shrug of disgust, and a good-night to me, stalked out of the room, bed-candle in hand. No doubt he thought his wretch of a brother-in-law did not well remember after dinner what he had done or said in the morning.

As I now had the Blacksheep to myself, I said calmly, "You are quite right. There was no talk about a book at all, Captain Baker. But I wished to see you alone, and impress upon you my earnest wish that everything which occurred this morning — mind, *everything* — should be considered as strictly private, and should be confided to *no person whatever* — you understand? — to no person."

"Confound me," Baker breaks out, "if I understand what you mean by your books and your 'strictly private.' I shall speak what I choose — hang me!"

"In that case, sir," I said, "will you have the goodness to send a friend of yours to my friend Captain Fitzboodle? I must consider the matter as personal

between ourselves. You insulted — and, as I find now, for the second time — a lady whose relations to me you know. You have given neither to her, nor to me, the apology to which we are both entitled. You refuse even to promise to be silent regarding a painful scene which was occasioned by your own brutal and cowardly behavior; and you must abide by the consequences, sir! you must abide by the consequences!" And I glared at him over my flat candlestick.

"Curse me! — and hang me! — and, etc., etc., etc.," he says, "if I know what all this is about. What the dooce do you talk to *me* about books, and about silence, and apologies, and sending Captain Fitzboodle to me? *I* don't want to see Captain Fitzboodle — great fat brute! *I* know him perfectly well."

"Hush!" say I, "here 's Bedford." In fact, Dick appeared at this juncture, to close the house and put the lamps out.

But Captain Clarence only spoke or screamed louder. "What do I care about who hears me? That fellow insulted me already to-day, and I 'd have pitched his life out of him, only I was down, and I 'm so confounded weak and nervous, and just out of my fever — and — and hang it all! what are you driving at, Mr. What 's-your-name?" And the wretched little creature cries almost as he speaks.

"Once for all, will you agree that the affair about which we spoke shall go no further?" I say, as stern as Draco.

"I sha'n't say anythin' about it. I wish you 'd leave me alone, you fellows, and not come botherin'. I wish I could get a glass of brandy-and-water up in my bedroom, I tell you I can't sleep without it," whimpers the wretch.

"Sorry I laid hands on you, sir," says Bedford,

sadly. "It was n't worth the while. Go to bed, and I 'll get you something warm."

"Will you, though? I could n't sleep without it. Do now — do now! and I won't say anythin' — I won't now — on the honor of a gentleman, I won't. Good-night, Mr. What-d'-ye-call." And Bedford leads the helot to his chamber.

"I 've got him in bed; and I 've given him a dose; and I put some laudanum in it. He ain't been out. He has not had much to-day," says Bedford, coming back to my room, with his face ominously pale.

"You have given him laudanum?" I ask.

"*Sawbones* gave him some yesterday, — told me to give him a little — forty drops," growls Bedford.

Then the gloomy major-domo puts a hand into each waistcoat pocket, and looks at me. "You want to fight for her, do you, sir? Calling out, and that sort of game? Phoo!" — and he laughs scornfully.

"The little miscreant is too despicable, I own," say I, "and it 's absurd for a peaceable fellow like me to talk about powder and shot at this time of day. But what could I do?"

"I say it 's SHE ain't worth it," says Bedford, lifting up both clenched fists out of the waistcoat pockets.

"What do you mean, Dick?" I ask.

"She 's humbugging you, — she 's humbugging me, — she 's humbugging everybody," roars Dick. "Look here, sir!" and out of one of the clenched fists he flings a paper down on the table.

"What is it?" I ask. It 's her handwriting. I see the neat trim lines on the paper.

"It 's not to you; nor yet to me," says Bedford.

"Then how dare you read it, sir?" I ask, all of a tremble.

"It's to him. It's to Sawbones," hisses out Bedford. "Sawbones dropt it as he was getting into his gig: and I read it. *I* ain't going to make no bones about whether it's wrote to me or not. She tells him how you asked her to marry you. (Ha!) That's how I came to know it. And do you know what she calls you, and what *he* calls you, — that castor-hoil beast? And do you know what she says of you? That you had n't pluck to stand by her to-day. There, — it's all down under her hand and seal. You may read it, or not, if you like. And if poppy or mandragora will medicine you to sleep afterwards, I just recommend you to take it. *I* shall go and get a drop out of the Captain's bottle — I shall.

And he leaves me, and the fatal paper on the table.

Now, suppose you had been in my case — would you, or would you not, have read the paper? Suppose there is some news — bad news — about the woman you love, will you, or will you not, hear it? Was Othello a rogue because he let Iago speak to him? There was the paper. It lay there glimmering under the light, with all the house quiet.

CHAPTER VI.

CECILIA'S SUCCESSOR.

MONSIEUR ET HONORÉ LECTEUR! I see, as perfectly as if you were sitting opposite to me, the scorn depicted on your noble countenance when you read my confession that I, Charles Batchelor, Esquire, did burglariously enter the premises of Edward Drencher, Esquire, M.R.C.S.I. (phew! the odious pestle-grinder, I never could bear him!) and break open, and read a certain letter, his property. I may have been wrong, but I am candid. I tell my misdeeds; some fellows hold their tongues. Besides, my good man, consider the temptation, and the horrid insight into the paper which Bedford's report had already given me. Would *you* like to be told that the girl of your heart was playing fast and loose with it, had none of her own, or had given hers to another? I don't want to make a Mrs. Robin Gray of any woman, and merely because "her mither presses her sair" to marry against her will. "If Miss Prior," thought I, "prefers this lint-scraper to me, ought I to balk her? He is younger, and stronger, certainly, than myself. Some people may consider him handsome. (By the way, what a remarkable thing it is about many women, that, in affairs of the heart, they don't seem to care or understand whether a man is a gentleman or not.) It may be it is my superior fortune and social station which may induce Elizabeth to waver in her choice between me and my bleeding, bolusing, tooth-drawing rival.

If so, and I am only taken from mercenary considerations, what a pretty chance of subsequent happiness do either of us stand! Take the vaccinator, girl, if thou preferrest him! I know what it is to be crossed in love already. It's hard, but I can bear it! I ought to know, I must know, I *will* know what is in that paper!" So saying, as I pace round and round the table where the letter lies flickering white under the midnight taper, I stretch out my hand — I seize the paper — I — well, I own it — there — yes — I took it, and I read it.

Or rather, I may say, I read that part of IT which the bleeder and blisterer had flung down. It was but a fragment of a letter — a fragment — oh! how bitter to swallow! A lump of Epsom salt could not have been more disgusting. It appeared (from Bedford's statement) that Æsculapius, on getting into his gig, had allowed this scrap of paper to whisk out of his pocket — the rest he read, no doubt, under the eyes of the writer. Very likely during the perusal, he had taken and squeezed the false hand which wrote the lines. Very likely the first part of the *precious document* contained compliments to him — from the horrible context I judge so — compliments to that vendor of leeches and bandages, into whose heart I dare say I wished ten thousand lancets might be stuck, as I perused the FALSE ONE'S wheedling address to him! So ran the document. How well every word of it was engraven on my anguished heart! If page *three*, which I suppose was about the bit of the letter which I got, was as it was — what must pages *one* and *two* have been? The dreadful document began, then, thus: —

"— dear hair in the locket, which I shall *ever* wear for the sake of *him who gave it*" — (dear hair! in-

deed — disgusting carrots! She should have been ashamed to call it "dear hair") — "for the sake of him who gave it, and whose *bad temper* I shall pardon, because I think in spite of his faults he is a *little fond* of his poor Lizzie! Ah! Edward! how *could* you go on so the last time about poor Mr. B.! Can you imagine that I can ever have more than a filial regard for the kind old gentleman?" (*Il était question de moi, ma parole d'honneur. I* was the kind old gentleman!) "I have known him since my childhood. He was intimate in our family in earlier and happier days; made our house his home; and, I must say, was most kind to all of us children. If he has vanities, you naughty boy, is he the only one of his sex who is vain? Can you fancy that such an old creature (an *old muff*, as you call him, you wicked, satirical man!) could ever make an impression on my heart? No, sir!" (Aha! So I was an old muff, was I?) "Though I don't wish to make *you* vain too, or that other people should laugh at you, as you do at poor dear Mr. B., I think, sir, you need but look *in your glass* to see that you need not be afraid of such a rival as *that*. You fancy he is attentive to me? If you looked only a little angrily at him, he would fly back to London. To-day, when your *horrid little patient* did presume to offer to take my hand, when I boxed his little wicked ears and sent him *spinning* to the end of the room — poor Mr. Batch was so *frightened* that he did not *dare* to come into the room, and I saw him peeping behind a statue on the lawn, and he would not come in until the *servants arrived*. Poor man! We cannot all of us have courage like *a certain Edward*, who I know is as *bold as a lion*. Now, sir, you must not be quarrelling with that wretched little captain for being rude. I have shown

him that I can very well *take care of myself.* I knew the *odious thing* the first moment I set eyes on him, though he had forgotten me. Years ago I met him, and I remember he was equally *rude and tips* —"

Here the letter was torn. Beyond "*tips*" it did not go. But that was enough, was n't it? To this woman I had offered a gentle and manly, I may say a kind and tender heart — I had offered four hundred a year in funded property, besides my house in Devonshire Street, Bloomsbury — and she preferred *Edward,* forsooth, at the sign of the Gallipot: and may ten thousand pestles smash my brains!

You may fancy what a night I had after reading that scrap. I promise you I did not sleep much. I heard the hours toll as I kept vigil. I lay amidst shattered capitals, broken shafts of the tumbled palace which I had built in imagination — oh! how bright and stately! I sat amongst the ruins of my own happiness, surrounded by the murdered corpses of innocent visioned domestic joys. Tick — tock! Moment after moment I heard on the clock the clinking footsteps of wakeful grief. I fell into a doze towards morning, and dreamed that I was dancing with Glorvina, when I woke with a start, finding Bedford arrived with my shaving-water, and opening the shutters. When he saw my haggard face he wagged his head.

"You *have* read it, I see, sir," says he.

"Yes, Dick," groaned I, out of bed, "I have swallowed it." And I laughed I may say a fiendish laugh. "And now I have taken it, not poppy nor mandragora, nor all the drowsy syrups in his shop (hang him) will be able to medicine me to sleep for some time to come!"

"She has no heart, sir. I don't think she cares for

t' other chap much," groans the gloomy butler. "She can't, after having known *us*" — and my companion in grief, laying down my hot-water jug, retreats.

I did not cut any part of myself with my razor. I shaved quite calmly. I went to the family at breakfast. My impression is I was sarcastic and witty. I I smiled most kindly at Miss Prior when she came in. Nobody could have seen from my outward behavior that anything was wrong within. I was an apple. Could you inspect the worm at my core? No, no. Somebody, I think old Baker, complimented me on my good looks. I was a smiling lake. Could you see on my placid surface, amongst my sheeny water-lilies, that a corpse was lying under my cool depths? "A bit of devilled chicken?" "No, thank you. By the way, Lovel, I think I must go to town to-day." "You'll come back to dinner, of course?" "Well — no." "Oh, stuff! You promised me to-day and to-morrow. Robinson, Brown, and Jones are coming to-morrow, and you must be here to meet them." Thus we prattle on. I answer, I smile, I say, "Yes, if you please, another cup," or "Be so good as to hand the muffin," or what not. But I am dead. I feel as if I am under ground, and buried. Life, and tea, and clatter, and muffins are going on, of course; and daisies spring, and the sun shines on the grass whilst I am under it. Ah, dear me! it's very cruel: it's very, very lonely: it's very odd! I don't belong to the world any more. I have done with it. I am shelved away. But my spirit returns and flitters through the world, which it has no longer anything to do with: and my ghost, as it were, comes and smiles at my own tombstone. Here lies Charles Batchelor, the Unloved One. Oh! alone, alone, alone! Why, Fate! didst thou ordain that I should be companion-

less? Tell me where the Wandering Jew is, that I may go and sit with him. Is there any place at a light-house vacant? Who knows where is the Island of Juan Fernandez? Engage me a ship and take me there at once. Mr. R. Crusoe, I think? My dear Robinson, have the kindness to hand me over your goatskin cap, breeches, and umbrella. Go home, and leave *me* here. Would you know who is the solitariest man on earth? That man am I. Was that cutlet which I ate at breakfast anon, was that lamb which frisked on the mead last week (beyond yon wall where the unconscious cucumber lay basking which was to form his sauce) — I say, was that lamb made so tender, that I might eat him? And my heart, then? Poor heart! wert thou so softly constituted only that women might stab thee? So I am a Muff, am I? And she will always wear a lock of his "dear hair," will she? Ha! ha! The men on the omnibus looked askance as they saw me laugh. They thought it was from Hanwell, not Putney, I was escaping. Escape? Who can escape? I went into London. I went to the clubs. Jawkins, of course, was there; and my impression is that he talked as usual. I took another omnibus, and went back to Putney. "I will go back and revisit my grave," I thought. It is said that ghosts loiter about their former haunts a good deal when they are first dead; flit wistfully among their old friends and companions, and, I dare say, expect to hear a plenty of conversation and friendly tearful remark about themselves. But suppose they return, and find nobody talking of them at all? Or, suppose, Hamlet (*Père*, and Royal Dane) comes back and finds Claudius and Gertrude very comfortable over a piece of cold meat, or what not! Is the late gentleman's present position as a ghost a very pleasant one?

Crow, Cocks! Quick, Sundawn! Open, Trap-door! *Allons:* it's best to pop under ground again. So I am a Muff, am I? What a curious thing that walk up the hill to the house was! What a different place Shrublands was yesterday to what it is to-day! Has the sun lost its light, and the flowers their bloom, and the joke its sparkle, and the dish its savor? Why, bless my soul! what is Lizzy herself — only an ordinary woman — freckled certainly — incorrigibly dull, and without a scintillation of humor: and you mean to say, Charles Batchelor, that your heart once beat about *that* woman? Under the intercepted letter of that cold assassin, my heart had fallen down dead, irretrievably dead. I remember, *àpropos* of the occasion of my first death, that perpetrated by Glorvina — on my second visit to Dublin — with what a strange sensation I walked under some trees in the Phœnix Park beneath which it had been my custom to meet my False One Number I. There were the trees — there were the birds singing — there was the bench on which we used to sit — the same, but how different! The trees had a different foliage, exquisite amaranthine: the birds sang a song paradisiacal; the bench was a bank of roses and fresh flowers, which young Love twined in fragrant chaplets around the statue of Glorvina. Roses and fresh flowers? Rheumatisms and flannel waistcoats, you silly old man! Foliage and Song? O namby-pamby driveller! A statue? — a doll, thou twaddling old dullard! — a doll with carmine cheeks, and a heart stuffed with bran — I say, on the night preceding that ride to and from Putney, I had undergone death — in that omnibus I had been carried over to t'other side of the Stygian shore. I returned but as a passionless ghost, remembering my life-days, but not feeling any more. Love was dead,

Elizabeth! Why, the doctor came, and partook freely of lunch, and I was not angry. Yesterday I called him names, and hated him, and was jealous of him. To-day I felt no rivalship; and no envy at his success; and no desire to supplant him. No — I swear — not the slightest wish to make Elizabeth mine if she would. I might have cared for her yesterday — yesterday I had a heart. Psha! my good sir or madam. You sit by me at dinner. Perhaps you are handsome, and use your eyes. Ogle away. Don't balk yourself, pray. But if you fancy I care a three-penny-piece about you — or for your eyes — or for your bonny brown hair — or for your sentimental remarks, sidelong warbled — or for your praise to (not of) my face — or for your satire behind my back — ah me! — how mistaken you are! *Peine perdue, ma chère dame!* The digestive organs are still in good working order — but the heart? *Caret.*

I was perfectly civil to Mr. Drencher, and, indeed, wonder to think how in my irritation I had allowed myself to apply (mentally) any sort of disagreeable phrases to a most excellent and deserving and good-looking young man, who is beloved by the poor, and has won the just confidence of an extensive circle of patients. I made no sort of remark to Miss Prior, except about the weather and the flowers in the garden. I was bland, easy, rather pleasant, not too high-spirited, you understand. — No: I vow you could not have seen a nerve wince, or the slightest alteration in my demeanor. I helped the two old dowagers; I listened to their twaddle; I gayly wiped up with my napkin three quarters of a glass of sherry which Popham flung over my trousers. I would defy you to know that I had gone through the ticklish operation of an excision of the heart a few hours previously.

Heart — pooh! I saw Miss Prior's lip quiver. Without a word between us, she knew perfectly well that all was over as regarded her late humble servant. *She* winced once or twice. While Drencher was busy with his plate, the gray eyes cast towards me interjectional looks of puzzled entreaty. *She*, I say, winced: and I give you my word I did not care a fig whether she was sorry, or pleased, or happy, or going to be hung. And I can't give a better proof of my utter indifference about the matter, than the fact that I wrote two or three copies of verses descriptive of my despair. They appeared, you may perhaps remember, in one of the annuals of those days, and were generally attributed to one of the most sentimental of our young poets. I remember the reviews said they were "replete with emotion," "full of passionate and earnest feeling," and so forth. Feeling, indeed! — ha! ha! "Passionate outbursts of a grief-stricken heart!" — Passionate scrapings of a fiddlestick, my good friend. "Lonely" of course rhymes with "only," and "gushes" with "blushes," and "despair" with "hair," and so on. Despair is perfectly compatible with a good dinner, I promise you. Hair is false: hearts are false. Grapes may be sour, but claret is good, my masters. Do you suppose I am going to cry my eyes out, because Chloe's are turned upon Strephon? If you find any whimpering in mine, may they never wink at a bees-wing again.

When the doctor rose presently, saying, he would go and see the gardener's child, who was ill, and casting longing looks at Miss Prior, I assure you I did not feel a tittle of jealousy, though Miss Bessy actually followed Mr. Drencher into the lawn, under the pretext of calling back Miss Cissy, who had run thither without her bonnet.

"Now, Lady Baker, which was right? you or I?" asks bonny Mrs. Bonnington, wagging her head towards the lawn where this couple of innocents were disporting.

"You thought there was an affair between Miss Prior and the medical gentleman," I say, smiling. "It was no secret, Mrs. Bonnington."

"Yes, but there were others who were a little smitten in that quarter, too," says Lady Baker; and she in turn wags *her* old head towards me.

"You mean me?" I answer, as innocent as a newborn babe. "I am a burnt child, Lady Baker; I have been at the fire, and am already thoroughly done, thank you. One of your charming sex jilted me some years ago; and once is quite enough, I am much obliged to you."

This I said, not because it was true; in fact, it was the reverse of true; but if I choose to lie about my own affairs, pray, why not? And though a strictly truth-telling man generally, when I do lie, I promise you I do it boldly and well.

"If, as I gather from Mrs. Bonnington, Mr. Drencher and Miss Prior like each other, I wish my old friend joy. I wish Mr. Drencher joy with all my heart. The match seems to me excellent. He is a deserving, a clever, and a handsome young fellow; and I am sure, ladies, you can bear witness to *her* goodness, after all you have known of her."

"My dear Batchelor," says Mrs. Bonnington, still smiling and winking, "I don't believe one single word you say — not one single word!" And she looks infinitely pleased as she speaks.

"Oh!" cries Lady Baker, "my good Mrs. Bonnington, you are always match-making — don't contradict me. You know you thought —"

"Oh, please don't," cries Mrs. B.

"I will. She thought, Mr. Batchelor, she actually thought that our son, that my Cecilia's husband, was smitten by the governess. I should like to have seen him dare!" and her flashing eyes turn towards the late Mrs. Lovel's portrait, with its faded simper leering over the harp. "The idea that any woman could succeed that angel, indeed!"

"Indeed, I don't envy her," I said.

"You don't mean, Batchelor, that my Frederick would not make any woman happy?" cries the Bonnington. "He is only seven-and-thirty, very young for his age, and the most affectionate of creatures. I am surprised, and it's most cruel, and most unkind of you, to say that you don't envy any woman that marries my boy!"

"My dear good Mrs. Bonnington, you quite misapprehend me," I remark.

"Why, when his late wife was alive," goes on Mrs. B——, sobbing, "you know with what admirable sweetness and gentleness he bore her — her — bad temper — excuse me, Lady Baker!"

"Oh, pray, abuse my departed angel!" cries the Baker; "say that your son should marry and forget her — say that those darlings should be made to forget their mother. She was a woman of birth, and a woman of breeding, and a woman of family, and the Bakers came in with the Conqueror, Mrs. Bonnington —"

"I think I heard of one in the court of Pharaoh," I interposed.

"And to say that a Baker is not worthy of a Lovel is *pretty* news indeed! Do you hear *that*, Clarence?"

"Hear what, Ma'am?" says Clarence, who enters at this juncture. "You're speakin' loud enough — though blesht if I hear two sh-shyllables."

"You wretched boy, you have been smoking!"

"Shmoking — have n't I?" says Clarence with a laugh; "and I've been at the 'Five Bells,' and I've been having a game of billiards with an old friend of mine," and he lurches towards a decanter.

"Ah! don't drink any more, my child!" cries the mother.

"I'm as sober as a judge, I tell you. You leave so precious little in the bottle at dinner, that I must get it when I can, must n't I, Batchelor, old boy? We had a row yesterday, had n't we? No, it was sugar-baker. I'm not angry — you're not angry. Bear no malish. Here's your health, old boy!"

The unhappy gentleman drank his bumper of sherry, and, tossing his hair off his head, said — "Where's the governess — where's Bessy Bellenden? Who's that kickin' me under the table, I say?"

"Where is who?" asks his mother.

"Bessy Bellenden — the governess — that's her real name. Known her these ten years. Used to dansh at Prinsh's Theatre. Remember her in the *corps-de-ballet*. Ushed to go behind the shenes. Dooshid pretty girl!" maunders out the tipsy youth; and as the unconscious subject of his mischievous talk enters the room, again he cries out, "Come and sit by me, Bessy Bellenden, I say!"

The matrons rose with looks of horror in their faces. "A ballet-dancer!" cries Mrs. Bonnington. "A ballet-dancer!" echoes Lady Baker. "Young woman, is this true?"

"'The Bulbul and the Roshe' — hay?" laughs the Captain. "Don't you remember you and Fosbery in blue and shpangles? Always all right, though, Bellenden was. Fosbery wash n't: but Bellenden was. Give you every credit for that, Bellenden. Boxsh my

earsh. Bear no malish — no — no — malish! Get some more sherry, you — whatsh your name — Bedford, butler — and I'll pay you the money I owe you." And he laughs his wild laugh, utterly unconscious of the effect he is producing. Bedford stands staring at him as pale as death. Poor Miss Prior is as white as marble. Wrath, terror, and wonder are in the countenances of the dowagers. It is an awful scene!

"Mr. Batchelor knows that it was to help my family I did it," says the poor governess.

"Yes, by George! and nobody can say a word against her," bursts in Dick Bedford, with a sob; "and she is as honest as any woman here."

"Pray, who told you to put your oar in?" cries the tipsy Captain.

"And you knew that this person was on the stage, and you introduced her into my son's family. Oh, Mr. Batchelor, Mr. Batchelor, I did n't think it of you! Don't speak to me, Miss!" cries the flurried Bonnington.

"You brought this woman to the children of my adored Cecilia?" calls out the other dowager. "Serpent, leave the room! Pack your trunks, viper! and quit the house this instant. Don't touch her, Cissy. Come to me, my blessing. Go away, you horrid wretch!"

"She ain't a horrid wretch; and when I was ill she was very good to us," breaks in Pop, with a roar of tears: "and you sha'n't go, Miss Prior — my dear, pretty Miss Prior. You sha'n't go!" and the child rushes up to the governess, and covers her neck with tears and kisses.

"Leave her, Popham, my darling blessing! — leave that woman!" cries Lady Baker.

"I won't, you old beast! — and she sha-a-an't go. And I wish you was dead — and, my dear, you sha'n't go, and Pa sha'n't let you!" — shouts the boy.

"Oh, Popham, if Miss Prior has been naughty, Miss Prior must go!" says Cecilia, tossing up her head.

"Spoken like my daughter's child!" cries Lady Baker: and little Cissy, having flung her little stone, looks as if she had performed a very virtuous action.

"God bless you, Master Pop, — you are a trump, you are!" says Mr. Bedford.

"Yes, that I am, Bedford; and she sha'n't go, shall she?" cries the boy.

But Bessy stooped down sadly, and kissed him. "Yes, I must, dear," she said.

"Don't touch him! Come away, sir! Come away from her this moment!" shrieked the two mothers.

"I nursed him through the scarlet fever, when his own mother would not come near him," says Elizabeth, gently.

"I 'm blest if she did n't," sobs Bedford — "and — bub — bub — bless you, Master Pop!"

"That child is wicked enough, and headstrong enough, and rude enough already!" exclaims Lady Baker. "I desire, young woman, you will not pollute him further!"

"That 's a hard word to say to an honest woman, Ma'am," says Bedford.

"Pray, Miss, are you engaged to the butler, too?" hisses out the dowager.

"There 's very little the matter with Barnet's child — only teeth. — What on earth has happened? My dear Lizzy — my dear Miss Prior — what is it?" cries the doctor, who enters from the garden at this juncture.

"Nothing has happened, only this young woman has

appeared in a new *character*," says Lady Baker. "My son has just informed us that Miss Prior danced upon the stage, Mr. Drencher; and if you think such a person is a fit companion for your mother and sisters, who attend a place of Christian worship, I believe — I wish you joy."

"Is this — is this — true?" asks the doctor, with a look of bewilderment.

"Yes, it is true," sighs the girl.

"And you never told me, Elizabeth?" groans the doctor.

"She's as honest as any woman here," calls out Bedford. "She gave all the money to her family."

"It was n't fair not to tell me. It was n't fair," sobs the Doctor. And he gives her a ghastly parting look, and turns his back.

"I say, you — Hi! What-d'-you-call-'im? Sawbones!" shrieks out Captain Clarence. "Come back, I say. She 's all right, I say. Upon my honor, now, she 's all right."

"Miss P—— should n't have kept this from me. My mother and sisters are Dissenters, and very strict. I could n't ask a party into my family who has been — who has been — I wish you good morning," says the doctor, and stalks away.

"And now, will you please to get your things ready, and go, too?" continues Lady Baker. "My dear Mrs. Bonnington, you think —"

"Certainly, certainly, she must go!" cries Mrs. Bonnington.

"Don't go till Lovel comes home, Miss. *These* ain't your mistresses. Lady Baker don't pay your salary. If you go, I go, too. There!" calls out Bedford, and mumbles something in her ear about "the end of the world."

"You go, too; and a good riddance, you insolent brute!" exclaims the dowager.

"Oh, Captain Clarence! you have made a pretty morning's work," I say.

"I don't know what the dooce all the sherry — all the shindy's about," says the Captain, playing with the empty decanter. "Gal's a very good gal — pretty gal. If she choosesh dansh shport her family, why the doosh should n't she dansh shport a family?"

"That is exactly what I recommend this person to do," says Lady Baker, tossing up her head. "And now I will thank you to leave the room. Do you hear?"

As poor Elizabeth obeyed the order, Bedford darted after her; and I know ere she had gone five steps he had offered her his savings and everything he had. She might have had mine yesterday. But she had deceived me. She had played fast and loose with me. She had misled me about this doctor. I could trust her no more. My love of yesterday was dead, I say. The vase was broken, which never could be mended. She knew all was over between us. She did not once look at me as she left the room.

The two dowagers — one of them, I think, a little alarmed at her victory — left the house, and for once went away in the same barouche. The young maniac who had been the cause of the mischief staggered away, I know not whither.

About four o'clock, poor little Pinhorn, the children's maid, came to me, wellnigh choking with tears, as she handed me a letter. "She's goin' away — and she saved both them children's lives, she did. And she've wrote to you, sir. And Bedford's a-goin'. And I'll give warnin', I will, too!" And the weeping handmaiden retires, leaving me, perhaps somewhat frightened, with the letter in my hand.

"Dear sir," she said — "I may write you a line of thanks and farewell. I shall go to my mother. I shall soon find another place. Poor Bedford, who has a generous heart, told me that he had given you a letter of mine to Mr. D——. I saw this morning that you knew everything. I can only say now that for all your long kindnesses and friendship to my family I am always your sincere and grateful — E. P."

Yes: that was all. I think she *was* grateful. But she had not been candid with me, nor with the poor surgeon. I had no anger: far from it: a great deal of regard and good will, nay admiration, for the intrepid girl who had played a long, hard part very cheerfully and bravely. But my foolish little flicker of love had blazed up and gone out in a day; I knew that she never could care for me. In that dismal, wakeful night, after reading the letter, I had thought her character and story over, and seen to what a life of artifice and dissimulation necessity had compelled her. I did not blame her. In such circumstances, with such a family, how could she be frank and open? Poor thing! poor thing! Do we know anybody? Ah! dear me, we are most of us very lonely in the world. You who have any who love you, cling to them, and thank God. I went into the hall towards evening: her poor trunks and packages were there, and the little nurserymaid weeping over them. The sight unmanned me; and I believe I cried myself. Poor Elizabeth! And with these small chests you recommence your life's lonely voyage! I gave the girl a couple of sovereigns. She sobbed a God bless me! and burst out crying more desperately than ever. Thou hast a kind heart, little Pinhorn!

"'Miss Prior — to be called for.' Whose trunks are these?" says Lovel, coming from the city. The dowagers drôve up at the same moment.

"Did n't you see us from the omnibus, Frederick?" cries her ladyship, coaxingly. "We followed behind you all the way!"

"We were in the barouche, my dear," remarks Mrs. Bonnington, rather nervously.

"Whose trunks are these? — what's the matter? — and what's the girl crying for?" asks Lovel.

"Miss Prior is a-going away," sobs Pinhorn.

"Miss Prior going? Is this your doing, my Lady Baker? — or yours, Mother?" the master of the house says, sternly.

"She is going, my love, because she cannot stay in this family," says mamma.

"That woman is no fit companion for my angel's children, Frederick!" cries Lady B.

"That person has deceived us all, my love!" says mamma.

"Deceived? — how? Deceived whom?" continues Mr. Lovel, more and more hotly.

"Clarence, love! come down, dear! Tell Mr. Lovel everything. Come down and tell him this moment," cries Lady Baker to her son, who at this moment appears on the corridor which was round the hall.

"What's the row now, pray?" And Captain Clarence descends, breaking his shins over poor Elizabeth's trunks, and calling down on them his usual maledictions.

"Tell Mr. Lovel where you saw that — that person, Clarence? Now, sir, listen to my Cecilia's brother!"

"Saw her — saw her in blue and spangles, in the 'Rose and the Bulbul,' at the Prince's Theatre — and a doosid nice-looking girl she was too!" says the Captain.

"There, sir!"

"There, Frederick!" cry the matrons in a breath.

"And what then?" asks Lovel.

"Mercy! you ask, What then, Frederick? Do you know what a theatre is? Tell Frederick what a theatre is, Mr. Batchelor, and that my grandchildren must not be educated by —"

"My grandchildren — my Cecilia's children," shrieks the other, "must not be pol-luted by —"

"Silence!" I say. "Have you a word against her — have you, pray, Baker?"

"No. 'Gad! I never said a word against her," says the Captain. "No, hang me, you know — but —"

"But suppose I knew the fact the whole time?" asks Lovel, with rather a blush on his cheek. "Suppose I knew that she danced to give her family bread? Suppose I knew that she toiled and labored to support her parents, and brothers and sisters? Suppose I know that out of her pittance she has continued to support them? Suppose I know that she watched my own children through fever and danger? For these reasons I must turn her out of doors, must I? No, by heaven! — No! — Elizabeth! — Miss Prior! — Come down! — Come here, I beg you!"

The governess, arrayed as for departure, at this moment appeared on the corridor running round the hall. As Lovel continued to speak very loud and resolute, she came down looking deadly pale.

Still much excited, the widower went up to her and took her hand. "Dear Miss Prior!" he said — "dear Elizabeth! you have been the best friend of me and mine. You tended my wife in illness, you took care of my children in fever and danger. You have been an admirable sister, daughter in your own family — and for this, and for these benefits conferred upon us,

LOVEL'S MOTHERS.

my relatives — my mother-in-law — would drive you out of my doors! It shall not be! — by heavens, it shall not be!"

You should have seen little Bedford sitting on the governess's box, shaking his fist, and crying "Hurrah!" as his master spoke. By this time the loud voices and the altercation in the hall had brought a half-dozen of servants from their quarters into the hall. "Go away, all of you!" shouts Lovel; and the domestic *posse* retires, Bedford being the last to retreat, and nodding approval at his master as he backs out of the room.

"You are very good, and kind, and generous, sir," says the pale Elizabeth, putting a handkerchief to her eyes. "But without the confidence of these ladies, I must not stay, Mr. Lovel. God bless you for your goodness to me. I must, if you please, return to my mother."

The worthy gentleman looked fiercely round at the two elder women, and again, seizing the governess's hand, said — "Elizabeth! dear Elizabeth! I implore you not to go! If you love the children — "

"Oh, sir!" (A cambric veil covers Miss Prior's emotion, and the expression of her face, on this ejaculation.)

"If you love the children," gasps out the widower, "stay with them. If you have a regard for — for their father" — (Timanthes, where is thy pocket-handkerchief?) — "remain in this house, with such a title as none can question. Be the mistress of it."

"His mistress — and before me! screams Lady Baker. "Mrs. Bonnington, this depravity is monstrous!"

"Be my wife, dear Elizabeth!" the widower continues. "Continue to watch over the children, who shall be motherless no more."

"Frederick! Frederick! have n't they got *us?*" shrieks one of the old ladies.

"Oh, my poor dear Lady Baker!" says Mrs. Bonnington.

"Oh, my poor dear Mrs. Bonnington!" says Lady Baker.

"Frederick, listen to your mother," implores Mrs. Bonnington.

"To your mothers," sobs Lady Baker.

And they both go down on their knees, and I heard a boo-hoo of a guffaw behind the green-baized servants' door, where I have no doubt Mons. Bedford was posted.

"Ah, Batchelor! dear Batchelor, speak to him!" cries good Mrs. Bonny. "We are praying this child, Batchelor — this child whom you used to know at college, and when he was a good, gentle, obedient boy. You have influence with my poor Frederick. Exert it for his heart-broken mother's sake; and you shall have my bubble-uble-essings, you shall."

"My dear good lady," I exclaim — not liking to see the kind soul in grief.

"Send for Doctor Straightwaist! Order him to pause in his madness," cries Baker; "or it is I, Cecilia's mother, the mother of that murdered angel, that shall go mad."

"Angel? *Allons!*" I say. "Since his widowhood, you have never given the poor fellow any peace. You have been forever quarrelling with him. You took possession of his house; bullied his servants; spoiled his children — you did, Lady Baker."

"Sir," cries her ladyship, "you are a low, presuming, vulgar man! Clarence, beat this rude man!"

"Nay," I say, "there must be no more quarrelling to-day. And I am sure Captain Baker will not molest

me. Miss Prior, I am delighted that my old friend should have found a woman of good sense, good conduct, good temper — a woman who has had many trials, and borne them with very great patience — to take charge of him, and make him happy. I congratulate you both. Miss Prior has borne poverty so well that I am certain she will bear good fortune, for it *is* good fortune to become the wife of such a loyal, honest, kindly gentleman as Frederick Lovel."

After such a speech as that, I think I may say *liberavi animam*. Not one word of complaint, you see, not a hint about "Edward," not a single sarcasm, though I might have launched some terrific shots out of my quiver, and have made Lovel and his bride-elect writhe before me. But what is the need of spoiling sport? Shall I growl out of my sulky manger, because my comrade gets the meat? Eat it, happy dog! and be thankful. Would not that bone have choked me if I had tried it? Besides, I am accustomed to disappointment. Other fellows get the prizes which I try for. I am used to run second in the dreary race of love. Second? Psha! Third, Fourth. *Que sçais-je?* There was the Bombay captain in Bess's early days. There was Edward. Here is Frederick. Go to, Charles Batchelor; repine not at fortune: but be content to be Batchelor still. My sister has children. I will be an uncle, a parent to them. Is n't Edward of the scarlet whiskers distanced? Has not poor Dick Bedford lost the race — poor Dick, who never had a chance, and is the best of us all? Besides, what fun it is to see Lady Baker deposed: think of Mrs. Prior coming in and reigning over her! The purple-faced old fury of a Baker, never will she bully, and rage, and trample more. She must pack up her traps and be off. I know she

must. I *can* congratulate Lovel sincerely, and that 's the fact.

And here at this very moment, and as if to add to the comicality of the scene, who should appear but mother-in-law No. 2, Mrs. Prior, with her Bluecoat boy, and two or three of her children, who had been invited, or had invited themselves, to drink tea with Lovel's young ones, as their custom was whenever they could procure an invitation. Master Prior had a fine "copy" under his arm, which he came to show to his patron Lovel. His mamma, entirely ignorant of what had happened, came fawning in with her old poke-bonnet, her old pocket, that vast depository of all sorts of stores, her old umbrella, and her usual dreary smirk. She made her obeisance to the matrons, — she led up her Bluecoat boy to Mr. Lovel, in whose office she hoped to find a clerk's place for her lad, on whose very coat and waistcoat she had designs whilst they were yet on his back: and she straightway began business with the dowagers —

"My lady, I hope your ladyship is quite well?" (A curtsy.) "Dear, kind Mrs. Bonnington! I came to pay my duty to you, Mum. This is Louisa, my lady, the great girl for whom your ladyship so kindly promised the gown. And this is my little girl, Mrs. Bonnington, Mum, please; and this is my big Blue. Go and speak to dear, kind Mr. Lovel, Gus, our dear good friend and protector, — the son and son-in-law of these dear ladies. Look, sir, he has brought his copy to show you; and it 's creditable to a boy of his age, is n't it, Mr. Batchelor? You can say, who know so well what writing is, and my kind services to you, sir — and — Elizabeth, Lizzy, my dear! where 's your spectacles, you — you —"

Here she stopped, and looking alarmed at the

group, at the boxes, at the blushing Lovel, at the pale countenance of the governess, "Gracious goodness!" she said, "what has happened? Tell me, Lizzy, what is it?"

"Is this collusion, pray?" says ruffled Mrs. Bonnington.

"Collusion, dear Mrs. Bonnington?"

"Or insolence?" bawls out my Lady Baker.

"Insolence, your ladyship? What — what is it? What are these boxes — Lizzy's boxes? Ah!" the mother broke out with a scream, "you've not sent the poor girl away? Oh! my poor child — my poor children!"

"The Prince's Theatre has come out, Mrs. Prior," here said I.

The mother clasps her meagre hands. "It was n't the darling's fault. It was to help her poor father in poverty. It was I who forced her to it. Oh, ladies! ladies! — don't take the bread out of the mouth of these poor orphans!" — and genuine tears rained down her yellow cheeks.

"Enough of this," says Mr. Lovel, haughtily. "Mrs. Prior, your daughter is not going away. Elizabeth has promised to stay with me, and never to leave me — as governess no longer, but as —" and here he takes Miss Prior's hand.

"His wife! Is this — is this true, Lizzy?" gasped the mother.

"Yes, Mamma," meekly said Miss Elizabeth Prior.

At this the old woman flung down her umbrella, and uttering a fine scream, folds Elizabeth in her arms, and then runs up to Lovel: "My son! my son!" says she (Lovel's face was not bad, I promise you, at this salutation and salute). "Come here, children! — come, Augustus, Fanny, Louisa, kiss

your dear brother, children! And where are yours, Lizzy? Where are Pop and Cissy? Go and look for your little nephew and niece, dears: Pop and Cissy in the schoolroom, or in the garden, dears. They will be your nephew and niece now. Go and fetch them, I say."

As the young Priors filed off, Mrs. Prior turned to the two other matrons, and spoke to them with much dignity: "Most hot weather, your ladyship, I 'm sure! Mr. Bonnington must find it very hot for preaching, Mrs. Bonnington! Lor'! there 's that little wretch beating my Johnny on the stairs. Have done, Pop, sir! How ever shall we make those children agree, Elizabeth?"

Quick, come to me, some skilful delineator of the British dowager, and draw me the countenances of Lady Baker and Mrs. Bonnington!

"I call this a jolly game, don't you, Batchelor, old boy?" remarks the Captain to me. "Lady Baker, my dear, I guess your ladyship's nose is out of joint."

"O Cecilia — Cecilia! don't you shudder in your grave?" cries Lady B. "Call my people, Clarence — call Bulkeley — call my maid! Let me go, I say, from this house of horror!" and the old lady dashed into the drawing-room, where she uttered I know not what incoherent shrieks and appeals before that calm, glazed, simpering portrait of the departed Cecilia.

Now this is a truth, for which I call Lovel, his lady, Mrs. Bonnington, and Captain Clarence Baker, as witnesses. Well, then, whilst Lady B. was adjuring the portrait, it is a fact that a string of Cecilia's harp — which has always been standing in the corner of the room under its shroud of Cordovan leather — a string, I say, of Cecilia's harp cracked, and went off with

a loud *bong*, which struck terror into all beholders. Lady Baker's agitation at the incident was awful; I do not like to describe it — not having any wish to say anything tragic in this narrative — though that I *can* write tragedy, plays of mine (of which envious managers never could be got to see the merit) I think will prove, when they appear in my posthumous works.

Baker has always averred that at the moment when the harp-string broke, her heart broke too. But as she lived for many years, and may be alive now for what I know; and as she borrowed money repeatedly from Lovel — he must be acquitted of the charge which she constantly brings against him of hastening her own death, and murdering his first wife Cecilia. "The harp that once through Tara's halls" used to make such a piteous feeble thrumming, has been carted off I know not whither; and Cecilia's portrait, though it has been removed from the post of honor (where, you conceive, under present circumstances it would hardly be *àpropos*), occupies a very reputable position in the pink room up stairs, which that poor young Clarence inhabited during my visit to Shrublands.

All the house has been altered. There 's a fine organ in the hall, on which Elizabeth performs sacred music very finely. As for *my* old room, I will trouble you to smoke *there* under the present government. It is a library now, with many fine and authentic pictures of the Lovel family hanging up in it, the English branch of the house with the wolf crest, and *Gare à la louve* for the motto, and a grand posthumous portrait of a Portuguese officer (Gandish), Elizabeth's late father.

As for dear old Mrs. Bonnington, she, you may be sure, would be easily reconciled to any live mortal who was kind to her, and any plan which should make

her son happy; and Elizabeth has quite won her over. Mrs. Prior, on the deposition of the other dowagers, no doubt expected to reign at Shrublands, but in this object I am not very sorry to say was disappointed. Indeed, I was not a little amused, upon the very first day of her intended reign — that eventful one of which we have been describing the incidents — to see how calmly and gracefully Bessy pulled the throne from under her, on which the old lady was clambering.

Mrs. P. knew the house very well, and everything which it contained; and when Lady Baker drove off with her son and her suite of domestics, Prior dashed through the vacant apartments gleaning what had been left in the flurry of departure — a scarlet feather out of the dowager's room, a shirt-stud and a bottle of hair-oil, the Captain's property. "And now they are gone, and as you can't be alone with him, my dear, I must be with you," says she, coming down to her daughter.

"Of course, Mamma, I must be with you," says obedient Elizabeth.

"And there is the pink room, and the blue room, and the yellow room for the boys — and the chintz boudoir for me — I can put them all away, oh, so comfortably!"

"I can come and share Louisa's room, Mamma," says Bessy. "It will not be proper for me to stay here at all — until afterwards, you know. Or I can go to my uncle at St. Boniface. Don't you think that will be best, eh, Frederick?"

"Whatever you wish, my dear Lizzy!" says Lovel.

"And I dare say there will be some little alterations made in the house. You talked, you know, of painting, Mr. Lovel; and the children can go to their grandmamma Bonnington. And on our return when

the alterations are made we shall always be delighted to see *you*, Mr. Batchelor,—our kindest old friend. Shall we not, Frederick?"

"Always, always," said Frederick.

"Come, children, come to your teas," calls out Mrs. P., in a resolute voice.

"Dear Pop, I 'm not going away—that is, only for a few days, dear," says Bessy, kissing the boy; "and you will love me, won't you?"

"All right," says the boy. But Cissy said, when the same appeal was made to her: "I shall love my dear mamma!" and makes her new mother-in-law a very polite curtsy.

"I think you had better put off those men you expect to dinner to-morrow, Fred," I say to Lovel.

"I think I had, Batch," says the gentleman.

"Or you can dine with them at the club, you know?" remarks Elizabeth.

"Yes, Bessy."

"And when the children have had their tea I will go with Mamma. My boxes are ready, you know," says arch Bessy.

"And you will stay and dine with Mr. Lovel, won't you, Mr. Batchelor?" asks the lady.

It was the dreariest dinner I ever had in my life. No undertaker could be more gloomy than Bedford, as he served us. We tried to talk politics and literature. We drank too much, purposely. Nothing would do. "Hang me if I can stand this, Lovel," I said, as we sat mum over our third bottle. "I will go back and sleep at my chambers. I was not a little soft upon her myself, that's the truth. Here's her health, and happiness to both of you, with all my heart." And we drained a great bumper apiece, and I left him. He was very happy I should go.

Bedford stood at the gate, as the little pony-carriage came for me in the dusk. "God bless you, sir," says he. "I can't stand it; I shall go too." And he rubbed his hands over his eyes.

He married Mary Pinhorn, and they have emigrated to Melbourne; whence he sent me, three years ago, an affectionate letter, and a smart gold pin from the diggings.

A month afterwards, a cab might have been seen driving from the Temple to Hanover Square: and a month and a day after that drive, an advertisement might have been read in the "Post" and "Times:" "Married, on Thursday, 10th, at St. George's, Hanover Square, by the Reverend the Master of St. Boniface College, Oxbridge, uncle of the bride, Frederick Lovel, Esquire, of Shrublands, Roehampton, to Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the late Captain Montagu Prior, K. S. F."

We may hear of LOVEL MARRIED some other day, but here is an end of LOVEL THE WIDOWER. *Valete et plaudite*, you good people, who have witnessed the little comedy. Down with the curtain; cover up the boxes; pop out the gas-lights. Ho! cab. Take us home, and let us have some tea, and go to bed. Good-night, my little players. We have been merry together, and we part with softs hearts and somewhat rueful countenances, don't we?

THE END.